

Appointment of new governor inflames Yemeni political crisis

SANAA (Agencies) — The appointment of a new governor has inflamed passions in Yemen just a week before federal political parties are due to sign an accord aimed at salvaging the country's threatened unity.

Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, member of the southern-based Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), appointed a new governor to a southern province in a decree issued on Monday.

But the decree was quickly over-ruled by the presidential council, currently dominated by the YSP's northern rival, the General Peoples Congress (GPC), and condemned by the third party in Yemen's coalition government.

"(The decree was) in violation of the constitution, since appointment of senior officials lies within the jurisdiction of the council," Radio Sanaa reported.

The YSP and GPC, mired for months in political rivalry, were the ruling parties of former South and North Yemen respectively before the two merged in May 1990.

With Yemen facing its worst political crisis since unification, ruling and opposition parties are due to sign an agreement in Amman next week, providing for military, economic and administrative reforms.

Mr. Attas, according to Aden Television, appointed Mohammad Ali Ahmad as governor of the southern province of Abyan to succeed the outgoing governor, Yahya Al Ra'i, who had been elected a deputy in a by-election.

Under the constitution, civil servants should resign their post upon their election to the 301-member parliament.

"(The decree) runs counter to the law and constitution and harms the higher interests of the country," one GPC official was quoted on Radio Sanaa as saying. "We call on all political forces to condemn this behaviour which is aimed at obstructing the signing of the accord."

The Islamist Islah Party, third member of Yemen's coalition government, also denounced the appointment. "This is a move to divide the country," the party's spokesman said. "We cannot find any explanation of this unlawful measure except that it reflects the desire to

continue the tense political situation and incite other political parties in order to create obstacles to arrangements for the signing of the accord."

The presidential council is made up of five members, but the two YSP representatives — Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh and Salem Saleh Mohammad — have been boycotting it.

The remaining three are President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani of the GPC and Abdul Maguid Al Zindani of the Islah Party.

The decree and counter-decree were broadcast by Aden Television and Radio Sanaa run respectively by the YSP and the GPC. Aden Television ignored the presidential council's decree in its bulletin early on Tuesday.

Mr. Attas, like Mr. Beedh and other YSP officials have been staying in Aden, capital of the former South Yemen and stronghold of the YSP. Cabinet meetings in Sanaa are chaired by Hassan Makki, first deputy prime minister and GPC member.

Tribal feud

A feud between members of Yemen's two biggest tribal confederations has sent the price of cooking gas spiralling tenfold as tribesmen hold up trucks carrying butane cylinders, political and tribal sources said Tuesday.

Residents of Sanaa and other cities have been queuing over the past few days in search for the gas. The official price for butane is 45 rials (\$0.75) per cylinder, but the price has jumped as high as 500 rials (\$8.30).

Members of the Bakil confederation were holding trucks belonging to members of the other confederation, Hashed, charging that a Hashed businessman failed to pay the price of cars he bought from them, the sources said.

Tribal sources said the businessman, whose name has been linked in newspaper reports over the past few days to cases of fraud and forgery, gave the Bakil members posted checks for which there was no cover.

The businessman is reported to have sought refuge in one of Hashed's strongholds to the north Sanaa.

In a bid to force the author-

ities to act and guarantee their rights, the Bakil people cut the roads from the Marib area where butane gas is produced and held the trucks, preventing them from proceeding to Sanaa and other areas, the sources said.

The two confederations were also involved in a dispute over a road in the northwestern area of Hajjah last month which led two members of the Bakil seizing three French tourists and holding them hostage.

The three were freed on Saturday following pledges by the authorities to find a solution to the problem of the road, which was originally planned to cross Bakil land but has been rerouted to go through Hashed areas.

Hashed is led by Sheikh Abdullah Bin Hussein Al Ahmar, speaker of the parliament and leader of the Islamist Islah Party.

Convicts seek amnesty

Three kidnapped Chinese engineers are in the hands of wanted murderers who are demanding that the authorities drop death sentences against them, a Chinese embassy official said here Tuesday.

"To free the Chinese, the three Yemeni kidnappers want the government to cancel death sentences pronounced against them in absentia," early in January, embassy Second Secretary Luo Xiao Guang told AFP.

The kidnappers are wanted for several murders, Yemeni sources said Monday.

"No progress was made by the authorities in their talks with the kidnappers," he said. One of the hostages is chief engineer Yan Yi, 55, according to the diplomat, who did not name the two others.

The hostages are held by members of the Khawlan tribe in Hajjah region, 50 kilometres east of Sanaa, he added.

To win their release, the embassy is in contact with the ministries of interior and planning, and with influential Khawlan tribesmen as well, he said.

The engineers were kidnapped Saturday while working on a road project financed by China to link Hajjah and Maareb, 17 kilometres east of the capital, in the rugged and tribal northeast.

Israeli jets bomb Lebanon

NABATIYEH (Agencies) — Israeli warplanes blasted bases of resistance fighters in two assaults Tuesday.

Security sources said at least one guerrilla of the Hizbollah group was wounded in the mid-morning attacks on the group's redoubts in South Lebanon.

The sources, who demanded anonymity, said the assaults targeted Hizbollah's arms hideouts and infiltration trails in Iqlim Al Tufah, which faces an enclave Israel occupied in the south.

Two F-16 fighter-bombers swooped down from thick clouds at 9:50 a.m. (0750 GMT) to fire four rockets on Jabal Safi and the nearby valley of Nabeh Tasseh in Iqlim Al Tufah, Hizbollah's main stronghold in South Lebanon.

Smoke and dust shrouded the region. Half an hour later, the jets returned to unleash five more rockets on Iqlim Al Tufah's bluffs, according to the security sources.

Eyewitnesses said guerrillas retaliated with nine surface-to-air missiles, but scarlet balloons released by Israeli pilots deflected them all.

The planes also dropped delayed-action bombs that continued to explode about an hour after the raids, according to the sources.

In occupied Jerusalem, an Israeli army spokesman confirmed the raid saying all aircraft returned safely to base.

"All the targets, which were in a zone entirely controlled by the Hizbollah,

were destroyed," he said. The Hizbollah positions were used for training and launching attacks on Israeli targets, he said.

A spokesman for Hizbollah in Beirut said there were no casualties in the attacks. "The warplanes only hit rocks," a Hizbollah spokesman told AFP.

The raids came three days after Hizbollah's Secretary General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah warned his group would step up attacks against Israel in South Lebanon.

The Iranian-backed movement killed four Israeli soldiers and wounded five others on Feb. 7 in the bloodiest attack since August, triggering Israeli air strikes and artillery attacks and threats of further reprisals.

Iran strengthens stand Rushdie deserves death

TEHRAN (Agencies) — Iran's Revolutionary Guards vowed on Tuesday that the death sentence against British author Salman Rushdie would be carried out.

The guards, in a statement published in Iranian newspapers, said the "fatwa" issued against Mr. Rushdie by Iran's late spiritual guide Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini five years ago was "irrevocable and would definitely be executed."

The Indian-born writer was condemned to death for his novel "The Satanic Verses," which was judged to blaspheme Islam.

"Rushdie has insulted the sentiments and beliefs of more than a billion Muslims and should be punished according to the fatwa," the statement said.

The Iranian official news agency said Monday on the fifth anniversary of the ruling that Mr. Rushdie was an apostate and should die.

"The sentence has to be carried out irrespective of whether the apostate repents or not," it said.

On Tuesday, Jomhuri-e-Islami newspaper denounced Western support for Rushdie and called on "Islamic forces to kill him."

"It is time to assert the will of the Islamic World," said the daily, "close to Islamic hardliners. Islamic forces should eliminate Rushdie and strike a blow to the enemies of Islam."

The paper said that the verdict had been reaffirmed on its

fifth anniversary by several Islamic associations here and the Khorad-15 religious foundation, which has put up a reward of more than \$2 million on Mr. Rushdie's head.

British Prime Minister John Major said on Monday that Iran could not expect to enjoy "full and friendly relations" with the rest of the world until the sentence was lifted.

IRNA said: "World Muslims and leaders of Muslim countries have made it clear that no one has the right to alter or hinder the implementation of this decree."

"Salman Rushdie is not a national issue specific to any certain Muslim country... according to divine laws, an apostate like Rushdie, born into a Muslim household, faces the death sentence for blaspheming prophets and values held dear by world Muslims."

"The sentence has to be carried out irrespective of whether the apostate repents or not, because repentance in such a case is a matter solely concerning divine mercy in afterlife."

"Political observers consider the West's support for a sentenced apostate as being a grimace to the just demand of one billion Muslims... Muslims will not forget that insult," it added.

It criticised Britain for continuing to offer Mr. Rushdie protection and lambasted President Bill Clinton for receiving the writer in Washington last year.

Cabinet change possible in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's prime minister has not ruled out the possibility of a cabinet reshuffle following reports one is planned for next month, according to a newspaper report.

Al Seyasseh and its sister paper the English-language Arab Times newspaper on Monday quoted reliable sources as saying a reshuffle of the emirate's 16-member cabinet would take place after the annual 'Eid Al Fitr holiday in mid-March.

Tuesday's edition of Al Qabas said it had asked Crown Prince and Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah whether the cabinet would resign in the way indicated by Al Seyasseh and the Arab Times.

It quoted him as replying: "The matters are bound by their timings — after a week, after a month, after a year — I don't want to hide anything from the people of Kuwait, and I don't want to say to them a thing that will not happen."

'Eid Al Fitr, which celebrates the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, falls this year on March 13-15.

"The main purpose of the change is to strengthen the cabinet and boost its powers," Al Seyasseh reported.

"The country's higher authorities believe it is high time the cabinet was reinforced in such a way as to achieve more harmony among cabinet members and prepare the government for new developments in the country which require unity and quick decision-making," the newspaper quoted its sources as saying.

The report said it was not clear how extensive the changes would be. It did not say which ministers would be replaced but added a number of people had been approached to see if they were interested in serving in a new cabinet.

It noted that current cabinet, formed after general elections in October 1992, includes a record six elected members of parliament (MPs).

The elections, restoring parliament after a six-year break, produced an outspoken assembly dominated by opposition veterans who have seldom hesitated in challenging different aspects of government policy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Vatican envoy in Israel presents credentials

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Vatican's first diplomatic envoy to Israel, Monsignor Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo, presented his credentials on Monday to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, officials said. Mr. Cordero di Montezemolo who will have the title of "special representative," will have his office in Jaffa, near Tel Aviv. Jaffa has a large Franciscan community. Israel's first diplomatic envoy to the Vatican Shmuel Hadas presented his credentials to Pope John Paul II on Thursday. Under their "fundamental agreement" signed on Dec. 30, the Holy See and Israel will exchange "special representatives" before upgrading their relations after a few months to ambassadorial level.

Israeli soldier dies in blast during training

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli soldier died in an accident when a grenade went off in his vest as he trained for action in southern Lebanon, reports said Tuesday. The army said Shoshan Yanai, 20, of the southern town of Ofakim was killed Monday while training for "operational action" on a firing range in northern Israel. It said the chief of staff Ehud Barak has appointed an investigation. Israeli newspapers said a preliminary investigation showed the grenade apparently exploded while it was still in Yanai's vest. The Haaretz daily said Yanai's unit was training for action in southern Lebanon. Last year 17 soldiers died in army accidents, three while in training, five while on duty in Lebanon and the rest mostly in traffic accidents, the newspapers said.

Traffickers, drugs, seized in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Iranian security forces have netted 92 drug traffickers in the northeastern province of Khorasan in a two-week crackdown, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. The agency said 720 kilograms of drugs were seized from the traffickers in the cities of Gezik, Gonabad, Torbat-e-Jam, Sabzevar, Qaen and Kashmar. It said a small quantity of light arms and a number of vehicles also were seized. The brief dispatch did not say when the operation began or ended. Khorasan neighbours Iran's Sistan-Baluchestan province, which has been under tight security since violence erupted in its capital city, Zahedan, Feb. 1.

Iran opens repaired refuelling jetty

NICOSIA (AP) — A refuelling jetty in Iran's key oil port of Abadan, which was heavily bombed during the 1980-88 war with Iraq, was reopened Monday after 13 years. The Islamic Republic News Agency said the jetty could only service vessels of up to five-metre draught and with a 2,000-tonne capacity. It said the jetty would service 1,200 tankers, tugboats and merchant ships in the region. The facility, bombed in the early days of the war, was repaired by Oil Ministry workers, IRNA said. Throughout the war, the Iraqis repeatedly targeted Abadan and its surroundings in an effort to cripple Iran's oil exports. Tehran's economic lifeline. Abadan, in southern Iran, is known as Iran's oil capital. It houses what once was the world's largest refinery. The refinery also is under repair.

Lebanon wants to sell 10 grounded Mirages

BEIRUT (R) — The Lebanese government agreed Monday to sell 10 Mirage fighter planes, grounded since the early days of Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war. The government of Prime Minister Rafik Al Hariri gave no further details in a statement after a cabinet session but officials said Pakistan had showed interest in buying the jets. They said the government has still to get a report from the military estimating the worth of the warplanes, bought by Lebanon from France in the 1960s. Lebanon had been pondering for several years whether to rebuild or sell the planes, which stopped operating in the early days of the war, poor maintenance crippled the jets. Six ancient but operational Hawker Hunters currently make up Lebanon's small airforce.

Israel and EU to open talks on new accord

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and the European Union (EU) will soon launch negotiations on a new cooperation agreement with the aim of concluding a deal by the end of the year, the EU delegation in Tel Aviv said Monday. Manuel Marin, vice president of the European Commission, will visit Israel on Thursday to announce the talks, for which an exact date still has to be set, the delegation said in a statement. "The agreement is to reflect the different aspects of the economic relationship between the EU and Israel, reflecting Israel's status as a neighbouring country with which the EU wishes to maintain particularly close relations," the statement said. Israel wants greater access to European markets in the new agreement which is to replace a trade accord dating from 1975.

U.N. seeks extension of Iraq aid programme

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The United Nations is seeking one year's extension of its humanitarian aid programme in Iraq, an official said here Monday. Mohammad Zejjari, the coordinator of the U.N.'s humanitarian activities, told AFP that donor countries last month in Geneva had asked the United Nations to prepare an annual rather than a six-month aid programme beginning in April. The U.N. humanitarian programme, established after the Gulf war in February 1991, seeks to meet the most urgent needs of Iraqis. Iraq has been hard hit by sanctions imposed after its forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Mr. Zejjari said the world body had received \$200 million between March 1993 and March 1994, while the total cost of the aid programme for that same period was estimated at \$489 million. U.N. member states finance the programme through voluntary contributions.

In isolated settlement, real threat could be Israel

By Karin Laub
The Associated Press

NETZARIM, occupied Gaza Strip — This isolated Jewish settlement keeps out Palestinians with two lines of electric fences, barbed wire and watchtowers. But the real threat to its existence comes from Israel, these days.

Senior officials like Foreign Minister Shimon Peres say it will take too many soldiers and too much money to sustain small, vulnerable Netzarim and perhaps other settlements.

"If Peres says such a thing it's worrisome, but it gives us more motivation to prove that we will stay here," settler Itzhak Wasana, 26, said Monday as he walked on a sandy path along one of the barbed-wire fences.

Later Monday, the settler council representing 144 set-

tlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip announced a registration drive for volunteers willing to block troops with passive resistance at endangered settlements.

From Netzarim, population 180, the outskirts of Gaza City with its 300,000 Palestinian residents were clearly visible during a visit Monday. The settlement, astride the main southern entrance to the city, is about a five-minute drive from the city centre. Nobody from Netzarim ever goes.

The settlement emerged as a key obstacle in delaying implementation of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) autonomy accord well past the initial Dec. 13 deadline.

The Palestinians wanted it dismantled. They found it inconceivable that for the sake of 27 families, an entire army company would control a main east-west artery in

Gaza.

In the talks, Israel stuck to the original plan signed last summer, which says that no settlements, including 16 in Gaza, would be dismantled during the five-year interim period of Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Peres and others now argue, however, that since Israel is no longer being pressured by the Palestinians, it may decide on its own to dismantle Netzarim and a similar enclave north of Gaza City called Dugit. Residents there have said they would exchange their homes for similar property in Israel.

Mr. Peres also cited Vered Yericho, near the soon-to-be autonomous West Bank town of Jericho, as a possible candidate for dismantling.

With his remarks, Mr. Peres signalled that the future of Netzarim and perhaps other settlements is negotiable.

Netzarim, which means "sapling" in Hebrew, is a cluster of about 30 red-roofed cottages and 50 mobile homes built on sand dunes over the past decade. One-third of the cottages and all the mobile homes stand empty because the settlement has had trouble attracting residents to such an obvious target.

Despite the threat, they rejected an army request last month to move soldiers into 10 empty caravans to protect the site once autonomy begins.

"I don't know any man who wants an army base next to his home," said tomato farmer Eliyahu Uzan, 33, belying the sign of one of the mobile homes that reads, "Netzarim has a heart for soldiers."

About two weeks ago the army began levelling the sand dunes outside Netzarim for a new base, prompting Palestinians to grumble that the only

thing the peace process was bringing was more soldiers.

The work stopped several days ago, Mr. Wasana said, apparently because the Palestinian owner of the land got a court injunction against the work.

Netzarim residents say they live here out of a sense that God promised the land to the Jews. They scoff at the idea that they are just holding out to get the best deal possible from the government if they agree to leave.

"We came here as pioneers," said Mr. Uzan, standing in his greenhouse.

Bracha Nissan, 28, mother of four and soon to give birth, takes care of eight toddlers in the day-care centre. She tries to block out the hostile surroundings and the lack of support from other Israelis.

"It's a good life here. I don't want to talk about the future. We believe we belong here and we will stay here," she said.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Only
18:00 N.B.A. sport
19:00 News in French
19:15 Le Journal De L'Histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Too Close for Comfort
21:10
20:48 AD: The Green House Effect
22:00 News in English
22:30 The Man Who Cried

PRAYER TIMES

04:57 Fajr
06:16 (Sunrise) Duha
11:50 Dhuhar
14:55 Asr
17:25 Maghreb
18:43 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweetish, Tel. 810740
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 637283
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 627440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541,
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 623543,
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331,
771331,
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772611,
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751,
Armenian International Church Tel. 625256,
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328,
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 684195
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 654932,
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691,
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will be affected by a cold air front, that is why clouds will gradually build up with rain falling in various parts of the Kingdom, temperatures dropping, and winds becoming southerly active. In Aqaba, partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with winds becoming westerly active and seas rough.

Min./Max. temp.
Amman 5/11

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mokheles Mazharieh 820425
Dr. Nasser Ibrahim 831039
Dr. Mohammad Al Izzah 752971
Dr. Mohammad Al Nabawi 819213
First pharmacy 621912
Ferdous pharmacy 783336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairookh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 626730
Yaouub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637640
Nairookh pharmacy 624672
Najib pharmacy 847632

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 893390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381

FOR THE TRAVELLER

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/332
Khulid Maternity, J. Amn. 642816
Abdali Maternity, J. Amn. 624412
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 669131
Shmeisani Hospital 845845
University Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/66
Italian, Al-Muhajirah 771013
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 751112/6
Army, J. Amn. 871611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674135
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)905040
Jbn Sina Hospital (09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999090
IBRD:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272725
Ibn Al-Hafes Hospital (02)271700
AQA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (06)5220-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
08:00 Agaba (RJ)
08:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:15 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
15:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:50 Istanbul (RJ)
17:25 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:10 Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ)
18:10 Toronto, Montreal (RJ)
23:10 Rome (RJ)
23:45 Agga (RJ)
23:45 Cairo (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
05:30 Agaba (RJ)
09:30 Rome (RJ)
10:15 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:30 Berlin, London (RJ)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
11:00 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
19:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:00 Riyadh (RJ)
20:20 New Delhi (RJ)
20:30 Aden (RJ)
20:45 Agaba (RJ)
21:30 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:55 Beirut, Paris (AF)
06:25 Rome (AZ)
08:15 Beirut (ME)
10:25 Cairo (MS)
11:30 Sanaa (YV)
12:40 Jeddah (SA)
13:30 Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PI)
15:45 Rome (AZ)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

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Home News



KING VISITS ARMY HQ — His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces Tuesday visited the Armed Forces headquarters where he met with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Abdul Hafez Mirai Al Kaabneh with whom he discussed issues of interest to the Armed Forces. The King was accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Hamzeh Ibn Al Hussein and Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

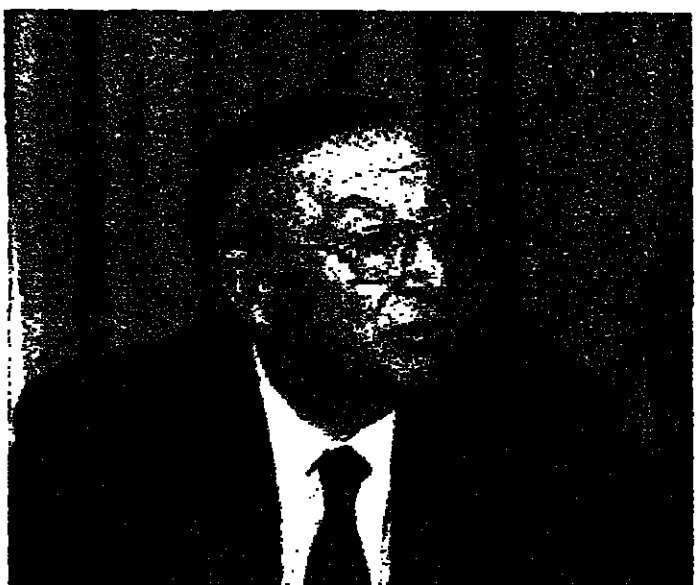
Turkmen: UNRWA keen to maintain present level of services in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) hopes by July to transfer some of its departments from the agency's headquarters in Vienna to Amman, according to UNRWA Commissioner General Iter Turkmen Tuesday.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Turkmen said that departments which have direct links with the services to the Palestine refugees in the Middle East will be transferred here to be closer to the fields of operations.

Mr. Turkmen, who is currently on a three-day visit to Jordan, was asked about prospects for increasing the salaries of UNRWA staff in Jordan. He said that the agency's employees get salaries equivalent to those paid to government employees, but the agency will give them raises.

Earlier reports had quoted Minister of State Adel Isheid as saying that in his talks with Mr. Turkmen in Vienna last week he learnt that the agency would pay salary increases to its staff retroactively, as of the start of 1994, and that it would purchase food and medicine for its functions from the Kingdom's markets.



Iter Turkmen

Referring to the reason for his current visit, which started Monday, Mr. Turkmen said that he wanted to follow up on UNRWA's activities which are handled by some 6,000 staff members in Jordan.

Amman also hosts a head office which supervises services to the Palestinian refugees in the Kingdom as well as in Syria, Lebanon, West Bank and Gaza Strip, added the agency commissioner general.

Services handled by the agency's staff in Jordan come second in size to those offered to the refugees in the Gaza Strip, where poverty and need are widespread, said Mr. Turkmen.

He pointed out that UNRWA was keen on maintaining the level of its present services in Jordan despite its meagre financial resources this year.

In Jordan, he said, UNRWA offers services to the residents of 10 camps which have 201 schools, offering education to 152,000 students, in addition to two vocational training centres and 21 health centres in Amman and other governorates.

UNRWA, which offers food aid to 29,000 refugees, is seeking to build more schools for refugee children and those who have just returned from the Gulf countries to settle in Jordan, added the agency's commissioner general.

In all, UNRWA annually spends JD 61 million in refugee services in Jordan, he added.

Mr. Turkmen referred to services in Gaza, noting that the agency's assistance is offered to at least seven per cent of the population which lives in abject poverty.

UNRWA offers financial loans for small-size, income-generating projects to stem poverty in the strip, according to Mr. Turkmen.

The agency plans to carry out major development schemes in the Gaza Strip during the transitional, autonomy rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, drawing on donations from the United States, Japan and the European Union, which gave pledges for \$80 million for that purpose.

Convicted plotters appeal military court sentence

AMMAN (AP) — Eight people convicted by a military tribunal of plotting to assassinate King Hussein are appealing their verdicts in a civilian appeals court, a lawyer said Tuesday.

Naem Madani, one of a team of lawyers representing the eight men, said the appeal was based on "the illegality of the verdict issued by the State Security Court," a juryless tribunal presided over by military officers.

Mr. Madani said the appeal was filed at the Court of Cassation on Monday. No date was fixed for hearing.

It marked the first time a verdict by the State Security Court has been challenged in a civil court since Parliament passed a law last year overturning a statute that had made the military tribunal's verdicts final.

Three of 10 defendants, two of them tried in absentia, were handed death sentences while the rest were given jail terms ranging from 15 years to life at hard labour.

Five were students from a military academy and another was a member of the Royal Escort Unit that follows the King around the clock. Three others, including the two at large, were traders and the fourth a mosque preacher.

All the defendants were found guilty of conspiring to kill the King during a June 26 graduation ceremony at Mu'tah University, a military college in south Jordan, in a plot hatched by the illegal Hezb-Al Tahrir, or Islamic Liberation Party.

Hezb Al Tahrir, a puritan Islamic group, does not recognise any existing Arab or Muslim governments and advocates the establishment of Islamic caliphates in their place.

Throughout the four-month trial, the defence maintained that confessions of defendants that formed the pillar of the prosecution case were extracted under torture.

Mr. Madani, the lawyer, asserted that the tribunal "did not follow the trial process as prescribed by law" and ignored a precedent where the same court had ruled that Hezb Al Tahrir did not espouse violence as a means to achieve its objectives.

Additionally, he said, "the interrogation (of the accused) was illegal, and unacceptable means were used by the interrogators to secure confessions from the defendants."

Mr. Madani also argued that the defence was denied any chance to produce evidence that the accused were tortured.

Omani, Palestinian envoys laud Kingdom's efforts to reconcile Yemeni leaders

AMMAN (J.T.) — The ambassadors of Oman and Palestine to Jordan Tuesday voiced their backing of Jordan's efforts to bring about reconciliation between the Yemeni leaders for the sake of preserving Yemen's unity.

Mohammad Ben Sultan Al Busaid Oman's ambassador was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that unity in Yemen which was achieved in May 1990 is of concern to all Arabs and not the Yemenis alone.

The ambassador lauded the Kingdom's efforts to convene a meeting for the Yemeni leaders President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his deputy Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh next Sunday in Amman to conclude an agreement that would seal the ongoing reconciliation efforts.

The Omani envoy said that Oman would pursue efforts to back Jordanian mediation efforts towards healing the rift between the Yemeni leaders.

Jordan's efforts, he said, reflect the Kingdom's concern to reestablish solidarity among Arab states.

Echoing the Omani ambassador's views, Palestine President Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim said Tuesday that the Palestinian people are firmly behind Jordan's endeavours to end the Yemeni leaders' disputes and help them preserve unity.

Mr. Abdul Rahim recalled Yemen's continued support for the Palestinian cause at the international and Arab fora and its continued material and moral support for the Palestinian people.

The preservation of the Yemeni unity, he said, is bound to boost the moral of the Arab masses in general and the Palestinians in particular.

The signing of a reconciliation and reform agreement was originally scheduled to have taken place in Amman earlier this month, but was put off after last minute differences emerged between the dominant parties in the North and South of the country.

Mr. Saleh's General People's Congress and Mr. Beedh's Yemen Socialist Party ruled North and South Yemen respectively until they merged in May 1990, creating unified Yemen.

The expected peace accord provides for political, economic, military and administrative reforms aimed at ending the country's political crisis.

Palestinian council invites qualified candidates to join

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An advertisement inviting applications from qualified candidates to work for the Palestine Economic Council for Reconstruction and Development (PECRD) appeared in a Jordanian newspaper Tuesday.

Palestinian sources said the advertisement was aimed at serving two purposes: One to open the door for qualified Palestinians living in the diaspora to join the council, which is in charge of reconstructing the economy of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the other to meet the demands of donors that qualifications rather than political patronage be the basis for appointment to the council.

Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat has indicated that he had no problems in hiring "Qualified people to work for the council as long as the final decision rests with him," said an informed Palestinian source.

The advertisements invited applications from experts from various sectors of state economy; directors of treasury and budget, financial administrator, internal auditor, tax directors, researchers and statisticians and computer experts, etc.

The place of work was given as Palestine. Applicants were asked to send their details to PECRD in Tunis and were given a fax number to a hotel in occupied Jerusalem, giving Feb. 25 as the deadline for applications.

The advertisement did not state Palestinian origin as a prerequisite. The sources said the door was open for all nationalities, but preference will be given to Palestinians.

According to the sources, such advertisements appeared for nearly one month in the occupied territories. The sources said they did not know what the response was.

Donor countries, which have pledged \$2.2 billion in assistance to support Palestinian self-rule envisaged in the Sept. 13 Israel-PLO accord, are demanding that qualified people be appointed to the PECRD, which will channel the aid.

"In fact, it is a precondition before the World Bank gives its green signal to releasing assistance," said a diplomatic source.

The World Bank condition also suits many independent-minded Palestinians who have been arguing the PLO leadership should switch its "revolution-oriented liberation" strategy to "nation-building priorities" and focus on people's qualifications rather than political loyalty.

Mr. Arafat has come under severe criticism from PLO figures as well as independent Palestinians for what they see as his refusal to make amends in his approach and to appoint people who may not be proven loyalists but are experts in their respective fields.

During exchanges with a group of reformists who also criticised his style of single-handed approach to negotiations with Israel and autocratic decision-making, Mr. Arafat agreed that independent Palestinians could be appointed to the PECRD as well as other institutions which will play a key role in the five-year interim autonomy period.

"However, he insisted on retaining his position as the overall head of the council and a final say in all matters related to its policy and functioning," said the Palestinian source.

Ahmad Qouriea, who led the Palestinian side in the secret negotiations in Oslo, Norway, that led to the Sept. 13 accord, is the executive head of the council.

Mr. Qouriea heads the Palestinian side to economic talks with Israel. The talks, which focus on trade and economic cooperation with Israel, are scheduled to resume in Paris on Feb. 21.

A 12-member committee has been named to govern the council, and critics say that most of its members are Arafat loyalists with little experience in running a state economy.

13 killed, hundreds wounded in occupied territories, report

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Palestinian Affairs at the Foreign Ministry here has said that the Israeli authorities last month killed 13 Arabs and wounded hundreds of others in clashes that occurred in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A department statement said victims of the Israeli attacks were 15 to 22 years of age.

Last month, Israeli courts passed sentences against 104 Palestinians who are now serving prison terms ranging from several months to a number of years, said the statement.

Since the signing of the Washington pact between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel in September last year, the Israeli authorities have confiscated 46,000 dunums of Arab land in the West Bank to expand or build settlements, uprooted 5,500 fruit trees owned by Palestinians, evicted 46 families from their homes in the course of building Jewish settlements, and demolished 63 Arab houses in a bid to stem the resistance, according to the statement.

Since the occupation of Arab lands in 1967, Israel has confiscated more than three million dunums of Arab-owned land in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and has never ceased to build settlements to encourage more Jews to settle on Arab lands, said the statement.

It noted that the West Bank now has 186 settlements while the Gaza Strip has 20.

Referring to conditions in Israeli jails, the report said that Palestinian detainees are continually facing torture and are suffering from contagious diseases due to poor facilities and malnutrition.

Japanese official ends visit after positive review of bilateral ties, peace process

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A senior Japanese official left Amman Tuesday after talks on the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations and economic cooperation.

Shigeru Endo, director of the First Middle East Department of the Japanese Ministry, also reviewed preparations for the next meeting of a multilateral working group on the environment. Japanese Ambassador Yuji Ikeda said.

Mr. Ikeda noted that Mr. Endo, who headed for Syria, had assumed his new post recently and was seeking to familiarise himself with the views of the various parties in the Middle East in the context of the 27-month-old Arab-Israeli peace process and the Japanese role in the negotiations.

Japanese officials have said that their country is committed to building an atmosphere conducive to the peace talks while leaving it to the parties directly involved to reach agreements.

This would mean encouraging the parties to participate in joint economic projects and shared regional infrastructure. Tourism is an area that Japan believes should be developed in Jordan as a means to facilitate "human contacts" that would contribute to a better atmosphere in the peace talks, officials from Tokyo say.

Tokyo chairs the environment working group of the multilateral phase of the peace process and is the deputy chairman of the working groups on economic cooperation and water.

The next meeting of the environment group is scheduled to be held in Cairo next month. During that meeting, a project to set up a pollution monitoring and data-collection centre in Aqaba is expected to be given a final shape.

The project is expected to be shared among Jordan, Egypt, Israel and possibly Saudi Arabia, all sharing the Red Sea basin. The United States and the European Union, as well as Japan, are the key contributors to the project which environment officials describe as vital to ensuring that emergency mechanisms are in place to counter any pollution of the Red Sea.

Ambassador Ikeda described as constructive Mr. Endo's talks here with Minister of Planning Ziad Fariz and Information Minister Jawad Anani, one of Jordan's key strategists in the peace process.

The talks covered Jordan's economic situation and its efforts to reschedule its foreign debts and Japanese support for the various development projects under way in the Kingdom.

Japan has consistently supported Jordan's economic development and has contributed significantly to the Kingdom's efforts to absorb the negative impact of the 1990-91 Gulf crisis. It extended \$750 million in loans and grants to Jordan during that period.

Jordan's debts to Japan now stand at JD 904 million. Part of it has been rescheduled and Japanese officials have promised to respond positively to Jordan's efforts for further rescheduling.

Mr. Ikeda said an \$80 million Japanese loan to Jordan's energy sector was in the pipeline. While a decision in principle has already been taken that the loan would be granted, specifics of the loan agreement have not been finalised, the ambassador told the Jordan Times.

"It is a matter of procedures of the government," he said, correcting a report which said that Jordan and Japan were expected to sign the loan agreement next month.

The loan will match a similar loan granted by the World Bank to help develop the Kingdom's energy sector, particularly a plan to expand the Aqaba thermal power plant at a total cost of more than JD 300 million.

The Japanese pledge to match the World Bank loan was made during a donors conference in Paris early last year which produced pledges of \$390 million to help Jordan plug a gap in the balance of payment.

The Japanese government indicated during Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's visit to Tokyo in November that it might increase its involvement in the project, perhaps up to \$150 million, according to sources.

Also expected during this year is Japanese assistance of up to \$40 million over and above bilateral loans, according to the sources.

Jordan does not qualify for any large amount of outright grants from the Japanese government since the Kingdom's per capita income is above the \$800 that Tokyo has set as the per capita income determinant for its direct financial assistance.

Japan stands out among world donors in rejecting debt relief. Its policy has always advocated self-reliance through national efforts while not shirking external obligations.

Japanese officials have explained that a promise made by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, to Dr. Majali in December that Tokyo would help Jordan's economic efforts meant that Tokyo would make more funds available to the Kingdom rather than offer debt relief.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ### EXHIBITIONS
- Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
 - Art exhibition entitled "Selections from the Artistic Works of Terra Sancta High School Students" at Amman National University (Salt Road).
 - Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.
 - Art and photo exhibition by several Arab artists at the Balqa Art Gallery in Fuhels (Tel. 720902).
 - Exhibition by Lebanese artist Hussein Madi at Darat Al Founun of the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation. Also showing the "permanent" exhibition of 54 Arab contemporary artists. (Tel. 643251/2)
 - Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).
- ### BOOK EXHIBITIONS
- Book exhibition at the University of Jordan.
 - Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00-midnight).
- ### DRAMAS
- Drama in Arabic entitled "Flee From Death" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:30 p.m.
 - Theatrical performances for children at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.
- ### FILM
- Film entitled "The Land Where the Blues Began" at the American Center at 2:30 p.m. (60 minutes).

Jordan Times Tel. 667171

Edson — a new Waterman pen

In keeping with Waterman's worldwide reputation for technological superiority and innovative design, their newest top-of-the-range fountain pen, the Edson, offers consumers yet another landmark in the history of writing instruments.

In 1883 Lewis Edson Waterman invented the modern fountain pen. In the 1920s the Waterman ink cartridge was invented and patented by the company. Today, Waterman introduces a fountain pen with a highly sophisticated ink feed system that ensures a smooth and steady ink flow and helps prevent the pen leaking, even at high altitudes.

Futuristic in design, elliptical in shape, the barrel of the Edson is a deep and translucent midnight blue which has been developed by Waterman engineers with the introduction of an unique double wall structure. The special fabric of the external barrel allows for the great transparency and depth of colour.

Hotels introduce business travellers package

Inter-Continental hotels and Forum hotels international have introduced another package tailored for the group business travellers, the trade mission to the Middle East.

The trade mission package includes excellent benefits which will ease the smooth organisation of a trade mission or business delegation. The package offers a variety of benefits which include group transportation of the delegation to and from nearest international airport, complimentary day use of meeting room, welcome drink upon arrival, free stay for spouse and mission leader upgrade.

Munther Twal, director of sales at Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan, says that this package is another step to ensure Inter-Continental's lead in providing quality services to the business traveller. Mr. Twal adds that the package is complementary to other business services provided by Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan such as the Club Inter-Continental, the Six Continent's Club and the Global Business Option.

Jordan Times

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Ultimatum may work

WITH FIVE days left to go before the end of NATO's ultimatum to Serbian forces to pull out their big guns from the vicinity of Sarajevo, all signals from the area indicate that the Serbs are this time beginning to heed the international threats.

U.S. President Bill Clinton appeared to be upbeat Monday about the success of NATO's diplomacy where the U.N. has failed over the past two years. So far the Serbs have moved 28 out of 500 heavy guns that have circled the capital city and rained death and destruction on it during the past years. Yet President Clinton has also said there is still the "larger issue of whether the international community can lead towards a reasonable peace agreement quickly after establishing a safe zone around Sarajevo."

This time around there is a real prospect for advancing the peace talks between the three warring factions. Once the Serbs received the loud and clear signal that NATO would take immediate and forceful action to stop the carnage in Bosnia, their leaders decided to talk. In retrospect, the failure of all past efforts to end the armed conflict in former Yugoslavia was due to the ambivalent position of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council. Without a clear-cut political will to end the cycle of violence in the war torn country, the Serbs had no incentive to strike a reasonable deal and end their waves of war crimes.

Against this backdrop, the bombing of Sarajevo last week that took the lives of nearly 70 men, women and children, was a turning point in the Bosnian conflict. It is unfortunate that nations begin to move and take effective measures against aggressors only after a tragedy occurs. The families of the people who lost their lives on that black Saturday may draw some comfort when they realise that NATO leaders, spearheaded by President Clinton, and French President Francois Mitterrand, have decided to act in the face of continued bloodletting in Bosnia.

There is little doubt that the climate for peace in that country has now made a turn around. Russia, the traditional ally of the Serbs, has reluctantly but effectively supported the decision to end the ongoing massacres and move towards a just settlement of the disputes between the Bosnians, Croats and Serbs. Russian Ambassador to the U.N. Yuli Vorontsov has this to say in the wake of the latest developments: "It is obviously extremely important for the Security Council to back up its demands with a proper resolution," for a ceasefire in Sarajevo and the withdrawal of heavy weapons from the zone. With Moscow edging closer to NATO's stance on the Bosnian situation, the stage is set for a remarkable progress in the peace talks on the future of the country. Hopefully NATO and the U.N. will stick to their guns this time in order to give peace in that troubled region of the world a real chance.

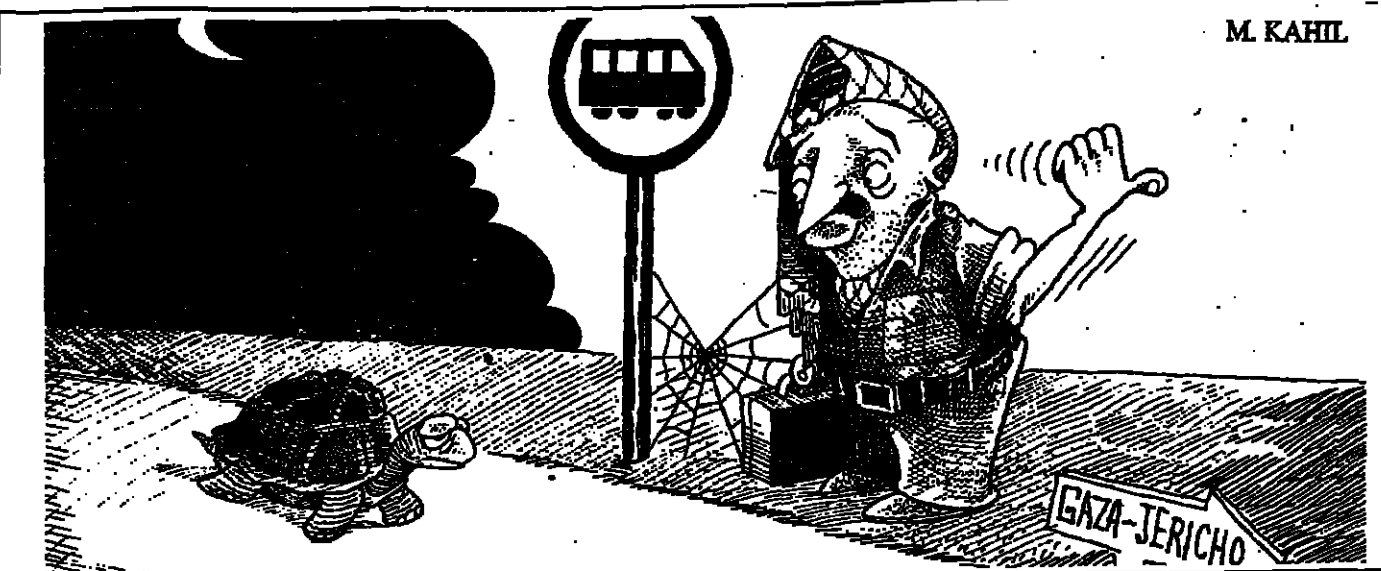
ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL DUSTOUR daily Tuesday commented on the resumption of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations in Washington, describing the talks as a matter of routine work that does not yield any fruitful result. Such meetings no longer produce magic effect on the Arab masses as the majority of Arabs believe that the talks are mainly aimed to keep the peace process alive working, while the real efforts are being made behind the scenes daily. If anything, the Israelis turned out to be the main beneficiary of the peace process which, the paper said, has opened all the doors wide for its leaders to achieve further gains at the expense of the Arabs Nation. In such a climate, and due to little care given by Washington as to whether the talks would achieve any result, the Israelis feel they are not obliged to give any concessions to the Arab and so they continue to hold on to their intransigent position, added the paper. The paper said that there is no point of continuing the Washington talks, which are not bound to achieve any positive results as long as the Israelis remain adamant in their position and determined to deny the Arabs their legitimate rights. It called on the Arab parties to the negotiations to re-examine the situation and refrain from participating in further meetings until the United States has assumed its role as an active partner in the talks and in helping to achieve genuine peace.

A COLUMNIST in Al Rai daily discussed the situation in Iraq three years after the allied forces bombed the Al Amiriah shelter, killing hundreds of innocent civilians. It was a massacre that shocked the whole world community, and its anniversary reminds that we stood witness to the atrocity and are not helping to end the sufferings of the Iraqi people, said Tareq Masarweh. It is we, the Arabs, who continue to impose sanctions on the Iraqis, further causing them to suffer, said the writer.

By Avi Silaim

The Israel-PLO accord and its critics



M. KAHIL

The writer is a professor of modern Middle Eastern history at S.T. Anthony's College at Oxford University. The article is reprinted from the college's bulletin.

THE AGREEMENT signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in Washington on Sept. 13, fully merited the overworked epithet 'historic' because it was the first time that both sides, simultaneously, accepted the principle of partition as the basis for the settlement of their conflict. The logic of partition is compelling. Since there are two peoples and only one land, partition of the land is the only fair and sensible solution. Partition was first proposed by the Peel Commission in 1937 and again by the U.N. in 1947 and turned down by the Palestinians both times. By the time the Palestinian National Council (PNC) endorsed the principle of partition and a two-state solution in 1988, Israel, under a Likud government, rejected the idea. That both sides now accept the idea of partition would seem to support Abba Eban's observation that people are capable of acting rationally when they have exhausted all the other alternatives.

To be sure, the Declaration of Principles (DOP) for limited self-rule in Gaza and Jericho for an interim period of five years falls a long way short of the demand for an independent Palestinian state. But big things sometimes have modest beginnings. State-building is a slow and gradual process and the most difficult part of it is the beginning. The history of Zionism is highly instructive in

this respect. Early Zionist leaders, unlike their Palestinian counterparts, were accomplished masters of the art of political gradualism. When the Peel Commission proposed a tiny Jewish state in 1937, Chaim Weizmann, the uncle of Israel's current president, thought that "the Jews would be fools not to accept it even if it is the size of a table-cloth." Although the Gaza-Jericho offer is about the size of a table-cloth, the Palestinians would do well to heed Weizmann's advice.

Of Jericho Chaim Weizmann said: "It was there that walls crumbled before the sound of trumpets. I have never heard of walls being built in this way." Although the reference harked back to the biblical story about Joshua's first major victory in the "Promised Land," it has especial resonance today. Once again, the Palestinians would be well advised to emulate the example of their opponents.

In their quest for statehood, the Zionists employed two

strategies: political Zionism and practical Zionism. The former was directed at cultivating international support for the idea of a Jewish state, the latter at building up on the ground the infrastructure of the state. Neither strategy would have worked on its own; together they paved the way to statehood in 1948. PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat has won a major diplomatic victory, but he and his colleagues now face the much more daunting challenge of building up the institutions of a state from the ground up in the occupied territories.

Palestinians who accuse Mr. Arafat of a sell-out should ask themselves why it is that Yitzhak Rabin's domestic opponents level precisely the same charge against him. If Mr. Rabin has conceded nothing of substance to the Palestinians, why are some Israelis up in arms against him? The answer is quite simple. Members of the Likud and of the nationalist parties further to the right see the deal as the beginning of the "Greater Israel." Their

ideology holds that the "Land of Israel," including the West Bank, belongs to the people of Israel. All of it. And for ever. They consider, rightly in my opinion, the tiny enclave in Jericho as the thin end of the wedge of a Palestinian state.

Vehement opposition to the deal on the part of Palestinian hardliners and Islamic militants was only to be expected. Some people can never be satisfied. More worrying is the growing opposition to the deal from moderates like Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO "foreign minister," and prominent intellectuals like Professor Edward Said. It has to be conceded that the critics have some cause for concern since the deal is not a full-blown agreement but largely an agenda for future negotiations. Yet some of the specific arguments put forward against the deal are rather one-sided.

One agreement for saying "no" to Mr. Rabin's offer is that it amounts to less than the autonomy plan proposed by

Menachem Begin after he concluded the Camp David accords with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in 1978. But Mr. Begin's autonomy plan applied only to people, not to territory. His government, like that of Yitzhak Shamir, was staunchly opposed to trading land for peace on the West Bank. By contrast, the Labour

Party, of which Yitzhak Rabin is the leader, has been committed to territorial compromise over the West Bank ever since 1967. Its approach to the West Bank is governed by considerations of security rather than of ideology. Provided Israel's security is not threatened, Mr. Rabin's government can be expected to extend the geographical scope and powers of the new Palestinian authority.

A second argument against the deal is that it was made between the strong and the weak and is therefore bound to serve the interests of the strong. As Edward Said put it in *The Guardian* on Sept. 9: "All secret deals between a

very strong and a very weak partner necessarily involve concessions hidden in embarrassment by the latter." But Israel's strength and Palestinian weakness are facts of life that have to be faced. Under these conditions the kind of agreement that Edward Said would like to see is simply unattainable. It is Gaklava in the sky. Holding out for all or nothing has left the Palestinians with nothing. Rejecting compromise proposals has not served the Palestinian cause in the past and it is unlikely to do so now.

A third objection to the Rabin-Arafat deal is that it leaves unresolved vital questions such as the Palestinian right of return, the eventual borders of the Palestinian entity, the future of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank and Gaza and the status of Jerusalem. But the deal is silent on all these highly sensitive issues for good reason: Had they been tackled, there would have been no deal. The right way forward is surely to concentrate on areas of agreement rather than disagreement and to leave the most difficult problems to the end. Such an approach involves a clear element of risk but nothing ventured, nothing gained.

Finally, the Gaza-Jericho plan is denounced because it carries no promise, let alone a guarantee, of a Palestinian state at the end of the five-year period of interim self-rule. But an Israeli agreement today to an independent Palestinian state is utterly beyond the bounds of the possible. The Israelis did not receive their state on a silver platter, nor will the Palestinians. Their best hope is that success in implementing self-rule in Gaza and Jericho will generate the momentum which will eventually carry them to full independence and statehood. There are no short-cuts.

The dangers of 'greater Jerusalem'

By Colleen Siegel
Reuter

BEIT JALAH, West Bank — Israeli builders are blasting their way through hills of the occupied West Bank. The Jewish state is creating "greater Jerusalem" for its people while it tries to sort out a peace deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin promises to swap occupied land for peace. But he says Israel will never surrender an inch of Jerusalem, the world's most fought over city. For what he calls security reasons, he insists on keeping a swathe of land around it: Greater Jerusalem.

Palestinians want the West Bank, Arab East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, all captured by Israel in the 1967 war, for a future independent state. Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, chief engineer of the peace deal, has questioned the wisdom of maintaining certain Jewish settlements in the occupied territories when Palestinian self-rule, which has been delayed by disputes over security, begins.

Other cabinet ministers are also talking openly about what was unthinkable only a few months ago: uprooting settlements in Gaza. The most vociferous opponents of Mr. Rabin's peace efforts are among Israel's 120,000 settlers. Rita Dogmaq says her Arab town of Beit Jalah, on a hilltop

south of Jerusalem, shakes as a traffic tunnel is bored under it aimed at a cluster of Jewish settlements called Gush Etzion.

"It's like bombs," she complains. Israel is developing more than 100 square km of occupied land even as it negotiates a first-phase pullout in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

East Jerusalem is home to 150,000 Jewish settlers. Almost half the more than 100,000 Jewish settlers elsewhere in the West Bank already live in "Greater Jerusalem."

Mr. Rabin's government wants more before negotiations begin on the final status of the occupied territories two years now.

What sort of peace allowed Israel to tunnel under (Beit Jalah) with impunity — Palestinian school principal.

"In East and greater Jerusalem, we are building about 15,000 housing units," said Housing Ministry Spokesman Amit Dobkin.

This is on top of some 13,500 units begun under the previous government which Mr. Rabin allowed to be completed in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights — after he took office

in 1992. Mr. Dobkin denies there is a contradiction.

"The government of Israel is first obligated to the peace process. There are no secrets... and there is one central important thing, and that is strengthening Jerusalem," Mr. Dobkin said.

Palestinian leaders such as Jerusalem's Faisal Al Hussein call the construction an obstacle to peace. They consider East Jerusalem as capital of a future state.

Mr. Dobkin said the government regarded Maale Adumim, the biggest Jewish settlement six km to the east of the city, and Givat Zeev, the same distance to the north, as part of "greater Jerusalem."

He said Gush Etzion, — 12

established it immediately after the 1967 war.

The multi-million dollar road under Beit Jalah will connect it to Jerusalem.

Joseph Alpher, head of Israel's Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, said it made strategic sense to annex Gush Etzion, Givat Zeev and Maale Adumim in a final peace deal.

The West Bank bulges into Israel above and below Jerusalem making a corridor from the coast to the city holy to Jews, Muslims and Christians. Annexation would widen the corridor.

In addition, the areas of Givat Zeev and Gush Etzion command sweeping views westward to the sea. Maale Adumim dominates a ridge overlooking Jordan to the east. Mr. Alpher added annexation would also ease the "settlements issue by including within Israel's boundaries on a very small portion of land a very large proportion of settlers." Evacuation and compensation problems would be reduced by half, he said.

Borders could undulate to leave out most of about 100,000 Palestinians living around the large Jewish enclaves.

But Solomon Nour, a Beit Jalah school principal, wondered what sort of peace allowed Israelis to tunnel under his town with impunity. "They don't ask," he said. "They just do it. Nothing has changed."

LETTERS

The implications of violence

To the Editor:

READING THE news about the male parliamentarian who attempted to hit our female representative in Parliament enraged me not because it was a clear act of violence, but because it brought to my mind vivid memories of women telling me about acts of violence committed by males against them; reports by scholars on wife battering; and memories of my lawyer friends telling me about the difficulties encountered by women in prosecuting battering cases (and other sorts of violence against women).

In our society, violence against women occurs with shocking frequency. In the broadest sense, violence against women is any violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity or freedom of movement. It includes all the ways society objectifies and oppresses women. Every form of violence threatens women with physical or psychological violation and limits our ability to make choices about our lives. Although factual information is hard to obtain, every day we see real and imagined violence against women in the news (i.e. honour killing), on television, in movies, etc., and in many cases it is presented as a fact of life. In the catalogue of abuse against women, battering is the most common and least reported crime. Battering happens to women of every age, profession and class.

Secondly, what enrages us all as advocates of democratisation about the incident in Parliament, is the effort to hamper the freedom of speech and expression; the effort to uphold restrictive provisions which we, as citizens, sought to revoke; and the effort to incite ethnic and sectarian division in a society which has been immune to schisms. What is more, is that these encroachments against freedom of expression came not from an ordinary person, but from someone who chose as our representative. A member of Parliament who by definition should embody the ideals of respect for human rights, for the freedom of expression and for civil liberties in general.

Therefore, we should reject the efforts being made to make Ms. Faissal "bury her grievance." I am not inciting trouble here, but merely noting that not only Ms. Faissal, but many others have had similar experiences of being silenced, challenged, patronised or told that their problems are insignificant. In the face of such inexcusable treatment, we must remember that no human being deserves to be verbally abused, discriminated against, silenced or beaten, especially in parliament, the embodiment of all freedoms.

Many years ago, most forms of abuse of freedom were hidden under a cloak of silence or tacit acceptance. We applaud Ms. Faissal for saying no to violence, for saying no to autocratic methods and for fighting back. The threat of violence continues to keep us from stepping out from behind traditional roles and boundaries. It literally "keeps us in our place."

Finally, what enrages me more in the case of Ms. Faissal is the discourse in our society about the incident. Some say that it is the strong character of the female deputy which led to such treatment against her, that she "brought it on to herself in some way." We as free thinkers should not feel guilty about violence done to us because society tells us that we caused it — a clear case of "blaming the victim."

Feeling guilty discourages us from fighting back. And in the case of Ms. Faissal, women are not guilty for violence committed by men on their body, mind and spirit. This violence happens because of men's greater power and their misuse of that power. No reason should justify male violence or violence by anybody. The fact that this is a single incident is not the point. The fact that so many men feel entitled to express their frustration or anger by being violent to so many women illustrates the power men, as a group, hold over women as a group. In this distorted way, even the most powerless men benefit from sexism.

Taking Ms. Faissal's case to the court may seem small, but it is a big step for us. With a long history of suppression of freedoms (in the broadest sense), advocates of democratisation should take action as a group. In raising this issue and others (such as the citizenship law, freedom of speech, liberalisation in all spheres), we encourage our female deputy to speak up.

Abla Amawi, Ph.D.
Amman

Features

Jordan, PLO make headway

(Continued from page 1)

Farouk Kaddoumi co-chairs the higher committee with Deputy Prime Minister Saad Al Tal.

"The change in this meeting was that we were able to merge the primary objectives, practical solutions and the important pressing issues which require immediate answers," Mr. Abed Rabbo said.

Dr. Anani said Tuesday's meeting concentrated on finding a "practical mechanism" for coordination which would have clear agendas, specific committees with set meeting dates.

"This will enable us to coordinate our position, especially that the negotiations and peace has begun to change from a reality and a conviction to a practical application on the ground which will touch the interests of both the Palestinians and Jordanians," Dr. Anani told reporters.

He said that "urgent basic issues" were also discussed including the issue of trade, security and borders.

"We agreed to mobilise the work of the committee entrusted with regulating the movement of people across the borders and to ensure that opening bridges will be in the interest of the people and their movement towards their home rather than a process of emptying the land of its people," Dr. Anani said.

Rifai secures seat; Badran quits

(Continued from page 1)

how the country should be run and on foreign policy," one of the sources said.

Between them, Mr. Rifai and Mr. Badran alternated as head of governments in the Kingdom for 18 years (1973-1991).

"There has to be more adjustability to the presence of political rivals if the work of the Senate is to continue," said one senator, levelling criticism at Mr. Badran.

He added that the Senate's time had been taken up by the details of appointments to Senate committees and other Senate-related positions at the expense of regular work.

The election of Mr. Rifai to replace Mr. Talhouqi, his father-in-law, had become the focus of a parliamentary debate, with some members saying that it would further strengthen his chances to complete his political comeback.

According to senators and well-informed sources, the Senate had been divided into two camps on the selection of Mr. Rifai for the job: One in support of Mr. Rifai and the other which supported the choice of either Ahmad Obeidat or former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Salem Masadeh.

The sources maintained that Mr. Rifai enjoyed a clear majority support over Mr. Obeidat and Mr. Masadeh. His supporters, in fact, had asked that the choice of candidate be put to vote in Tuesday's session because they felt sure of the result.

However, Senate tradition has been that decisions similar to this one are made in the corridors and not put to a vote in a Senate session.

According to the Senate sources, there were preliminary meetings among senators to reach a consensus for a Talhouqi successor in the influential council and that Mr. Rifai was able to win support from neutral members in his presentation of arguments for wanting the post.

"He manoeuvres well and was able to gain the support of those who were neutral among the senators," said a senator who asked for anonymity.

Suspects admit complicity

(Continued from page 1)

Monday that Mr. Shaaban had informed her of his plans to kill Mr. Mayyash.

Mr. Youssef is being held in protective custody.

Mr. Stamban has claimed he is innocent of any involvement in the assassination. He told interrogators Monday that he was shopping for a car in the eastern Bekaa Valley at the time of the shooting.

King Hussein said Sunday that Mr. Mayyash's killers had received their orders from their leaders based in an Arab country he did not name. He only described the country as the known base of the leader of the group which executed the plot.

Bilaterals resume with status quo

(Continued from page 1)

In its public statements, Syria has continued to demand that Israel fully withdraw from the Golan Heights seized in 1967 and "annexed" in 1981. Israel, on the other hand, has refused without security guarantees from Syria.

Privately, U.S. officials say they have done all they can to help Syria agree to normalised relations with Israel, especially pointing to the Geneva summit between President Bill Clinton and Syrian leader Hafez Al Assad.

But the recent death of Mr. Assad's son and heir, Basil, has created additional difficulties for the Syrian leader.

State Department officials say privately that Secretary of State Warren Christopher is planning to return to the Middle East in late March to sound out the Syrian government on its intentions.

Damascus Radio accused Israel Tuesday of "blackmailing" in the negotiations.

"Washington bilateral talks resume today amid growing Israeli manoeuvre to turn

Nature's spectacular fight back

SYDNEY — People are packing tours here to see nature fight back in Australia's oldest national park, reduced to a charred landscape by devastating bush fires five weeks ago.

Fires, believed by officials to be deliberately started, swept through 95 per cent of the 15,000 hectare (37,000 acre) Royal National Park as bush fires elsewhere killed four people, injured hundreds and destroyed 300 homes.

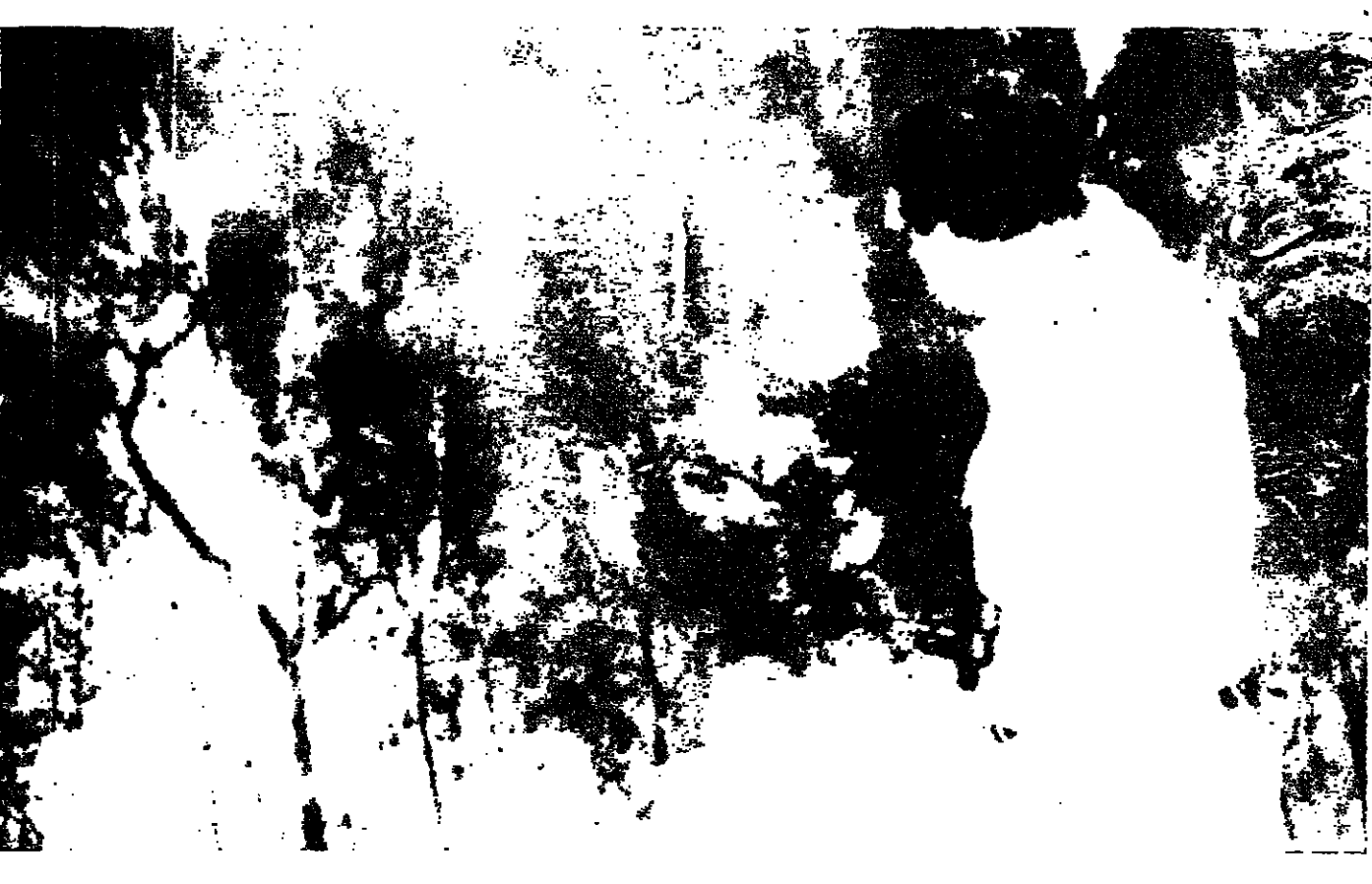
The New South Wales authorities said the fires were the worst for two centuries. But the Australian bush has been surviving ordeal by fire for millennia.

"It's a case of adapt or die," said park ranger Susan Aston as she shepherded two dozen visitors on a regeneration tour.

Nature's fight back is spectacular. In many places delicate green ferns and grass-trees rise knee high above the ground's black crust, and the new brown-tipped shoots of the dwarf apple are everywhere.

"The grass-trees started growing back in two days," said Ms. Aston.

The park's main trees, scribbled gums and Sydney red gums, leafless, blackened and dead-



An Australian man watches as a firestorm approaches his property in Sydney. The burnt woods are now attracting hundreds of visitors (AFP photo)

looking in January are simply shedding charred bark revealing new trunks in shades of ochre and burnt sienna.

Leaves are regrowing on limbs from epicormic buds which normally lie dormant under the bark.

"These buds are part of the trees' defence mechanism against fire. When 80 per cent of the canopy is burned they produce a feather-duster type of growth which keeps the tree alive. We expect to lose only 10 per cent of the trees from the blaze," Ms. Aston explains to the visitors.

They have been packing \$7 tours which the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) started because so many people wanted to see the burned-out park where walking trails have been closed indefinitely.

"We thought the tour would last only two weeks but we have been running them for a month now and they are always booked out," Ms. Aston said.

The fire was terrible, she said, but it has produced an ideal environment for new growth.

Botanists say this growth could include orchids not seen for more than 80 years.

Shrubs in the extensive heathland areas were killed in the blaze but most have seeds protected by hard pods.

"The fire causes a chemical reaction which eventually opens the pods allowing re-seeding to take place," said Ms. Aston.

"We have impressed on all the visitors that everything is not devastation — this is a really fascinating time," said ranger Andrew Harrigan.

"Because of all the seeds and shoots for some of the animals now is a real feast," he said.

Among animals feasting on the new growth are 150 rusa deer which are proving so harmful to the park's regeneration that they are to be rounded up, tranquilised and killed.

Apart from muching away at new shoots, the deer are breaking the crust which protects seeds and heavy rain last week washed away a vast number of seeds, the NPWS says.

A small number of rusa, a native of Southeast Asia, were brought in around 1900. They multiplied and now compete with wallabies and other native animals for food.

NPWS spokesman Stuart Cohen said the service "had to decide whether we want a national park or a deer farm and now was probably one of the most crucial times" in the history of the park which was established in 1879.

Agence France-Presse

Classrooms caught in the crossfire of guntoting youths

By Karen Lowe
Agence France Presse

WASHINGTON — Armed youths in U.S. schools are becoming more common, bolder and younger and classrooms are increasingly getting caught in the crossfire.

At least 2.5 million teenagers carry guns, knives and razors and 42 per cent of them have taken them to school in the past 30 days, according to a 1991 Centres for Disease Control (CDC) survey, the latest available.

"A lot of people are afraid of going to school, of being in school and going home from school," said George Butterfield, the deputy director of the National School Safety Centre.

Disputes over snubs, wearing rival gangs' colours, stepping into the wrong turf or even unsolicited looks that were once settled behind the school with epithets or fists are now drawing gunfire in school halls.

Last month, a student entered a chemistry classroom at Dunbar High School in Washington, asked the teacher if he could use the pencil sharpener and then pulled out a gun and fired on a student in the back row.

The bullet missed the intended target and the teacher ordered the panicked class of 20 students to dive for cover on the floor. Moments later, gunfire spilled outside the school building where 14 shots were fired.

Last year, a third-grader in Chicago pulled a gun out of his book bag and shot another student. In New York City, a 15-year-old shot and killed two teenagers in a school packed with police awaiting a speech by the mayor. Students in Cokerville, Wyoming, now have "drop-and-cover" drills.

Since 1985, the risk of being killed by firearms has increased 77 per cent for teenagers aged 15 to 19, the CDC said. In Washington, 83 of 87 teenagers killed last year were homicide victims — three times the national average.

Harvard psychologist Alvin Poussaint said what happens at home and on the streets will inevitably determine what occurs in the classroom and Washington's statistical profile partly explains the violence.

Roaming gangs around Los Angeles freeways have assaulted teenagers wearing opposing gang colours, such as blue for The Crips and the red for The Bloods.

To stop students from carrying weapons, many school systems across the country, especially in urban areas, have installed metal detectors and instituted random student searches.

"We have to assure these children," said George Greer, a researcher with Kids Count in Washington, "that they are safer in school than they are in the streets."

Bosnian refugees long for home

By P. Parameswaran
Agence France Presse

BANGI, Malaysia — The sound of heavy artillery in Sarajevo reverberates here in Southeast Asia's only refugee camp for Bosnian Muslims, although the war takes place far away in the former Yugoslav republic.

"Though we live thousands of miles away from the fighting, we toss and turn every night haunted by machine-gun fire and suffering of our loved ones in Bosnia-Herzegovina," said refugee Ermina Mujadzic, her eyes welling with tears.

Plucked to safety from the government hospital where she worked in Travnik in central Bosnia, the 30-year-old medical assistant is among 300 Bosnian Muslims in the refugee centres at Bangi and its surrounding area, south of Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.

"We pray the war will stop because we want to go home. There is no inner peace here," said Ms. Mujadzic, who lives in a block of sparsely furnished, two-room flats reserved for refugees comprising women and children.

Her male compatriots, most of them ex-Serbian concentration camp victims, and their wives stay in a block of flats in nearby Serdang town.

The refugees were brought here by the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (ABIM), a non-governmental organisation, in October 1992 in response to Prime Minister Mahatir Mohammad's decision to give humanitarian aid to the besieged Bosnian Muslims.

Predominantly Muslim, Malaysia, which is also the only Southeast Asian country to station peacekeeping troops in Sarajevo, has been a vocal critic of Western nations for what it sees as their indecisiveness in halting the 22-month war among Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats.

Like Ms. Mujadzic, who works in a dispensary of the national Electricity Corporation Tenaga Nasional, the older refugees are engaged in jobs, including factory work, as part of efforts to make them self-reliant. The younger people among them go to school and universities.

Work and studies have kept the refugees busy and help cushion the pain they carry with them. But local newspapers plastered with news on Bosnia and television portrayal of war-ravaged victims remind them of home.

"She keeps asking for her father, but it is difficult for her to understand that he is a soldier," said refugee Edina Kenjar of her seven-year-old daughter who attends government primary school. "We can only presume he is safe because letters from Bosnia are very rare."

The refugees have to send their letters to Geneva before they can be re-routed to Bosnia, officials said.

"Now that I have regained my health and strength, I am ready to go back and defend Bosnia," said former forklift operator Dzevad Salihovic, who claimed he was beaten up and left to starve in a Serbian concentration camp before he escaped.

Mr. Salihovic said his six brothers were still held in concentration camps when he was brought here.

Last month, the refugees had their spirits boosted when Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic toured the camp during a four-day official visit to Malaysia. They mobbed the leader and his delegation to enquire about their families back home.

"I had never dreamed of meeting the president face-to-face, not even when I was a soldier in Sarajevo," said Fahrudin Krelecevic, 25, who has been on crutches ever since he was shot in the spine by Serb soldiers.

ABIM Vice President Mohammad Anwar Tahir said the accommodation costs of the refugees would continue to be borne by his organisation until they were able to support themselves. ABIM, which runs a similar shelter for the wounded and homeless in Bosnia, also provides monthly subsidies to the refugees.

"This is our small contribution to world peace and our appreciation to the Malaysian government efforts to seek justice for the oppressed," said the ABIM official.

The Malaysian Muslim Welfare Organisation (PERKIM), helps ABIM run the refugee centre.



A Bosnian child pours water into a cup in a refugee camp (File photo)

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Israel, PLO near agreement

(Continued from page 1)

implemented on the ground," he told Israel radio.

After concluding talks on the police, Taba delegates have said they will address the release of thousands of Palestinian detainees in Israeli prisons. Palestinians say there are

Serbs defy NATO ultimatum

(Continued from page 1)

Sarajevo.

Muslim commander General Rasim Delic who had been due to attend the meeting failed to turn up.

In Brussels NATO sources said the head of the alliance's forces in Europe was to meet

Faisal to press her case

(Continued from page 1)

and Parliament should be taken seriously."

Ms. Faisal admitted that she doubts whether she could muster the required two-third vote in the House to lift Mr. Khreshina's immunity. "But that will not stop from trying," she said.

Serbs defy NATO ultimatum

(Continued from page 1)

with the U.N. special envoy to former Yugoslavia this week to discuss differences over enforcement of the ultimatum, as signs emerged that NATO was becoming increasingly critical of apparently inadequate U.N. plans to monitor the Serb artillery around the city.

The White House said it was

Asian exporters gain ground in Arab Gulf trade

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Japan and other Asian countries are gaining ground in a hectic race by major industrial states to grab a bigger share of the lucrative Arab Gulf market, official figures showed Tuesday.

Trade figures for Dubai, the main commercial centre in the Gulf, showed Japan and China topped the list of exporters to the emirate and other Asian states boosted sales as exports by most Western countries fell.

Dubai handles nearly one-fifth of the Gulf's non-oil trade and this made it the barometer of economic activity in the region. A large part of its imports are reexported to Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and other countries.

In 1993, its trade hit a record 65.3 billion dirhams (\$17.5 billion), including 50.5 billion dirhams (\$13.7 billion) worth of imports, according to figures by the government statistics bureau.

Japan topped the list of exporters to the emirate, with sales of 7.1 billion dirhams (\$1.93 billion), accounting for 14 per cent of the total imports. China came second, with exports of 4.4 billion dirhams (\$1.19 billion), accounting for 8.7 per cent of the total.

The 1993 figure for China was higher by around 13 per cent than in 1992, a Dubai trade official said. "China has made tremendous progress in entering the Gulf market. A few years ago, its exports to Dubai were negligible."

Most of China's exports to the emirate were textile and clothes, which were worth 1.6 billion dirhams (\$435 million), and electronic appliances with a value of 915 million dirhams (\$249 million).

China launched a drive into the Gulf market with the opening of a commercial centre in Dubai and the organisation of exhibitions after it established diplomatic ties with states in the region in the mid-1980s. Its trade with Gulf states had not exceeded \$100 million a year.

Japan is also one of the biggest exporters to the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), with exports totaling \$9 billion in 1992, they include cars, watches, and electronic and electric appliances.

Viacom announces victory in bid for Paramount

NEW YORK (R) — Viacom Inc. said Tuesday it won the bidding war for Paramount Communications, collecting almost 75 of Paramount stock with its tender offer and ending one of the biggest corporate takeover battles since the 1980s.

Viacom said stockholders of New York-based Paramount, which owns Paramount Pictures, Simon and Schuster Publishers, the New York Knicks basketball team and the New York Rangers hockey team, had tendered 91.7 million shares of stock by the midnight Monday (0500 GMT) deadline, representing 74.6 per cent of the outstanding shares.

Only 50.1 per cent of the stock was needed for a victory.

Viacom also said in a statement that its rival for Paramount, QVC Network, is required to end its competing bid as soon as it receives official word of the successful Viacom offer.

"We remain resolute in our intentions and unwavering in our conviction that the combination of Viacom, Paramount and Blockbuster will create a global media powerhouse of unparalleled proportions in the entertainment industry," said Sumner Redstone, chairman of Viacom. "Today is the beginning of the creation of this vast new enterprise."

Viacom has also agreed to merge with Blockbuster Entertainment, a Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based video retailer whose stores are well known across the country.

On Sunday rival Paramount bidder QVC, a Western Chester, Pennsylvania-based television shopping channel company, said it would not raise its bid.

QVC Chairman Barry Diller had been said to be considering a new bid if neither company obtained enough shares to win Monday.

Analysts and takeover stock specialists had predicted Viacom would receive the

necessary Paramount stock to declare victory. Viacom, a Dedham, Massachusetts-based cable television and broadcast company, bid a combination of cash and stock valued by analysts as worth at least \$9.5 billion.

QVC's final bid, also cash and stock, was valued at a minimum of \$8.9 billion. Arbitrators, who controlled 30-50 per cent of Paramount stock, said they favoured the Viacom bid because it offered more cash and promised to protect the value of Viacom stock in the deal.

The expiration of the offers followed a week of dramatic

activity in which QVC seemed to be trying to find a way to improve its bid for Paramount and prevent defeat.

QVC's statement Sunday was regarded by many as a concession, although it continued to maintain it had the better bid.

As late as midday Monday, QVC asked Paramount's board to reconsider its recommendation in favour of the Viacom offer, on the basis of declines in value of Viacom's stock price, which were due to growing perceptions it would win.

Paramount rejected the request for reconsideration.

Romanian unions plan general strike

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian trade unions, flexing their muscles in the biggest showdown with government since the 1989 revolution, are planning a general strike aimed at ousting Prime Minister Nicolae Vacaroiu for bungling economic reforms.

The ex-communist Balkan country's three main trade union blocs are uniting for the first time on a national scale with plans to cripple the economy through stoppages on Feb. 28.

The leading daily newspaper Evenimentul Zilei said the general strike plan was a "declaration of war against the regime" and that the government would come out fighting "with its entire arsenal."

Labour unrest has grown steadily among the 23 million Romanians, fuelled by 300 per cent inflation and low pay, since the one-party communist state collapsed in December 1989.

But the three big unions say a half-hearted and haphazard approach to free-market reform is the cause of economic blight.

Since Mr. Vacaroiu took office following free elections 18 months ago, the economy has been a mess, foreign creditors have stopped lending cash to Romania and privatisation and other key reforms have

slowed to a snail's pace.

Police said eight people froze to death during a cold snap in Bucharest this week as homes were hit by gas and power cuts, which were blamed on the freeze but which are an annual event due to bad management of state-owned utilities.

The Alfa, CNSRL-Fratia and NUB union movements claiming over 5.2 million workers — most of the state sector industrial work force — have urged Mr. Vacaroiu and his minority left-wing cabinet to resign by March and make way for a broader and more expert coalition, possibly including trade unionists.

Warning strikes in mining, farming and transport are already stoking the fires of confrontation between the merging trade union movement and the government.

Railway repair workers stoned the transport ministry and clashed with riot police in Bucharest last Friday in a dispute over delayed wage payments and inter-enterprise debts.

Coalminers in the western Jiu Valley coalfields began a strike on Monday. Although Industry Minister Dumitru Popescu said only 2,000 pitmen had joined it, several hundred militants forcibly occupied mine offices.

Clinton raises aid to Kazakhs as incentive, reward

WASHINGTON (R) — President Clinton Monday pledged \$396 million in new U.S. economic assistance to Kazakhstan to help the former Soviet republic move to a market economy and dismantle nuclear weapons.

Mr. Clinton, at a news conference with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, promised the aid after Mr. Nazarbayev presented him with papers documenting Kazakhstan's decision in December to join the nuclear

non-proliferation treaty. Declaring a "bright new era" in U.S.-Kazakh relations, Mr. Clinton raised to \$311 million this year from \$91 million last year the economic assistance to Kazakhstan to help the country's transition to a market economy.

And he said he was prepared to extend another \$85 million this year and in 1995 to help Kazakhstan dismantle a nuclear arsenal left on its territory after the collapse of the Soviet empire two years ago.

Dollar hits six-month low in Tokyo Japan says U.S. trade sanctions would kill dialogue

TOKYO (Agencies) — Japan warned the United States Tuesday that American sanctions would mean an end to dialogue on resolving their bilateral trade row and proposed a fresh summit to straighten things out.

The failure of Friday's summit between Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and U.S. President Bill Clinton has sent the dollar tailspinning along with prices of Tokyo stocks.

Economists warned the market turmoil could dash hopes for Japan's early recovery from recession.

As Tokyo struggled to cope with the twin falls, the top government spokesman reacted sharply to U.S. talk of imposing sanctions over allegations that Japan kept its cellular phone markets unfairly closed. This is the first specific issue to emerge since Friday's trade talks breakdown.

"We have no formal report of this talk on sanctions (on cellular phones)," chief cabinet secretary Masayoshi Takemura told a news conference.

"But sanctions would mean an end to discussion. We hope the Americans will take a commonsense approach," Mr. Takemura said.

In Washington, U.S. government officials said the Clinton administration was expected to rule that Japan violated a deal on the telephone but denied it would impose sanctions.

The New York Times, however, reported the U.S. government had already decided to initiate sanctions. It was unclear whether this meant Washington would immediately impose sanctions or whether this was merely the start of a process leading to punitive measures.

"Talk of sanctions should come at the very, very, very

last. The Japanese government is seriously trying to do all it can," Mr. Takemura said.

Mr. Hosokawa instructed government ministries Tuesday to draw up a set of emergency market-opening measures to placate the angry Americans, Mr. Takemura said.

Mr. Takemura said the direction of such new measures would be decided as soon as the rest of the Japanese summit team, still in Washington, returned home later this week.

The chief strategist in Mr. Hosokawa's coalition, Ichiro Ozawa, called for a fresh summit, the Jiji News Agency reported.

"It should be resolved as soon as possible in a dialogue (between Clinton and Hosokawa)," Mr. Ozawa told reporters.

"As a result of the Japan-U.S. summit talks, the yen has risen (and if the situation remains unchanged) the exported Japanese economy will suffer big damage," Mr. Ozawa said.

In last week's Washington talks, Mr. Hosokawa rejected U.S. demands to set "numerical targets" in specific trade sectors to measure how well the Japan kept its market-opening promises.

A leading Japanese banker said the idea of numerical targets was off the mark and would not resolve the problem. Toyoo Gyoten, Bank of Tokyo chairman and former top finance ministry bureaucrat, said: "What the negotiators were discussing at the table (in Washington) was a rather marginal increment of American export to the Japanese market..."

During the past 20 to 30 years, he said, the growing trade gap had not been checked by the dollar's fall from 360 yen to almost 100 yen or by

numerous market-opening measures, while Japan's domestic demand had grown faster than in America.

"There should be more transfer of productive capacity from Japan to the United States, thereby reducing Japan's excess capacity while reducing the United States' lack of capacity," he said.

The dollar closed sharply lower in hectic trading in Tokyo Tuesday at 102.02 yen after hitting a six-month low of 101.90 yen and prompting the Bank of Japan to step in with dollar purchases.

The closing rate was down 3.67 yen from the previous day's finish of 105.69 yen and down 0.53 yen from a late Monday quote of 102.55 yen in New York.

Fears were mounting that the dollar would duck below a historic barrier of 100 yen as intervention by the Bank of Japan alone could hardly stop the yen's further advance.

Mr. Hosokawa, leading a chorus of worries by Japanese government leaders, told reporters he was "gravely concerned" over the yen's sharp rise which followed the collapse of U.S.-Japan trade talks in Washington.

Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii said the foreign exchange market had been marked with "speculative moves" which would be "undesirable for the world economy." "We will respond in a timely and appropriate manner," he said, indicating further intervention by the central bank.

Manae Kubota, the state minister for economic planning, said the yen's sharp rise would "put a damper on the private sector's enthusiasm" after the government announced a massive economic package last week to stimulate consumer and capital spending.

Arab farming sector hit by pollution and lack of funds

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab countries have enough arable land to feed their people but pollution and lack of investments in the farm sector make them heavily dependent on imported food, according to a regional study.

Around 200 million hectares could be cultivated in the Arab region but only 50 million hectares are being exploited, said the study, published in the latest issue of the United Arab Emirates oil ministry magazine.

With a population growth of nearly three per cent a year, the food gap has steadily widened over the past two decades and is expected to worsen unless Arab governments take measures to expand their farming sector.

Between 1980 and 1990, the cumulative Arab food import bill reached around \$190 billion while nearly \$46 billion worth of farm equipment were also imported during the same period, the study said.

"The exacerbation of the food problem in the Arab World is attributed to desertification and malpractices by Arab people, including pollution, using improper irrigation systems, failure to fully exploit arable areas, and a construction onslaught on cultivated land," it said.

"The problem is aggravating every day as the population is growing fast and investments in the agricultural sector are insufficient," Experts said the Arab food

gap, the difference between imports and exports, continued to increase after 1990, reaching around \$22 billion a year.

Nearly 40 per cent of the gap exists in the oil-rich Gulf states, which depend more on food imports given their arid desert and scarce rain. A three to four per cent growth in the population of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has nearly doubled their food gap to \$9 billion a year.

Experts believe the Arab food problem could be tackled through adopting better farming policies and investments by GCC states in farming in fertile Arab countries. But they stress Arabs must first end their political differences and create a right investment atmosphere.

"You cannot expect Saudi Arabia to invest in such a vital sector in Iraq for example given their political dispute," one expert said.

Iraq is also suffering from a United Nations embargo while other fertile states in the region have their own problems. Sudan, dubbed the Arab food basket, is rocked by civil hostilities. Lebanon is still recovering from its 15-year civil war and Syria remains technically at war with Israel.

Somalia was hit with famine due to the conflict there although it had the biggest number of cattle in the Arab World. Other fertile nations like Tunisia and Morocco are suffering from a shortage of funds.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Carefully go over reports and statements to make certain they are accurate, before you attempt to draw logical conclusions from these financial papers. Who exactly is standing behind them?

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to get the support you need for important projects from good friends who have the means. Then get busy at those tasks ahead of you and complete them quickly.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Contact individuals who will help you make your property more comfortable and valuable. See how to add to present income appreciably in an ethical fashion.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you talk over some problem with a person who thinks differently from you, you find you can solve it quickly. Kin will help you with some task that is most boring for you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) If you waste too much time just worrying about a problem, you accomplish very little, so toss it aside for now and tomorrow the right solution comes to you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Talk over that new project with a friend and then see about getting the financial backing you need for it. Forget social life tonight, since little or nothing would come of it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Study that public problem well before you try to handle it. Show you are not a superficial person. Others are depending on you to get some work done, do it without fail and do it well.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have inspired ideas how to put new life into old projects that will make them successful instead of discouraging failures. Information from one overseas can be helpful.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Plans must be well worked out if you want to handle your responsibilities satisfactorily today. Don't rely on advisors since they are busy.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Pay attention to the ideas of an associate and do not look for bigwigs to do more for you than you have a right to expect.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Ideal day to attend to tasks that only you can handle properly and do so in a clever and ingenious way. Expressing some particular talent you have is also good.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A romantic interest has some rather strange ideas today, so smile them away and do not break up the relationship. Tomorrow they will be forgotten.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You had better cooperate with what family has in mind or you can certainly be the loser, as well as they. Ridding yourself of the cause of tensions at home is wise.

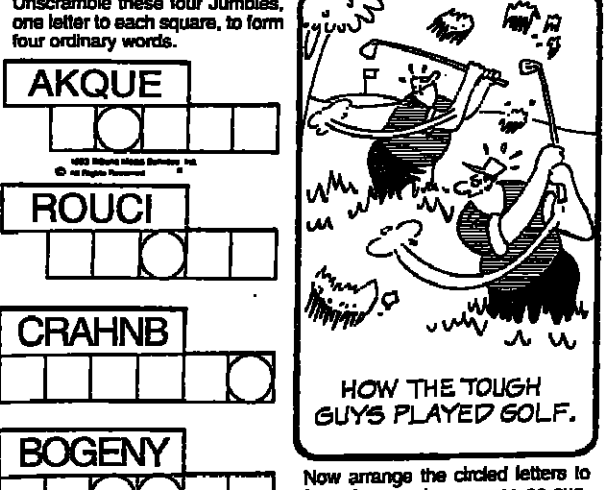
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"We're going out tonight and we haven't had a fight yet. It's bad luck to go out without fighting first."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

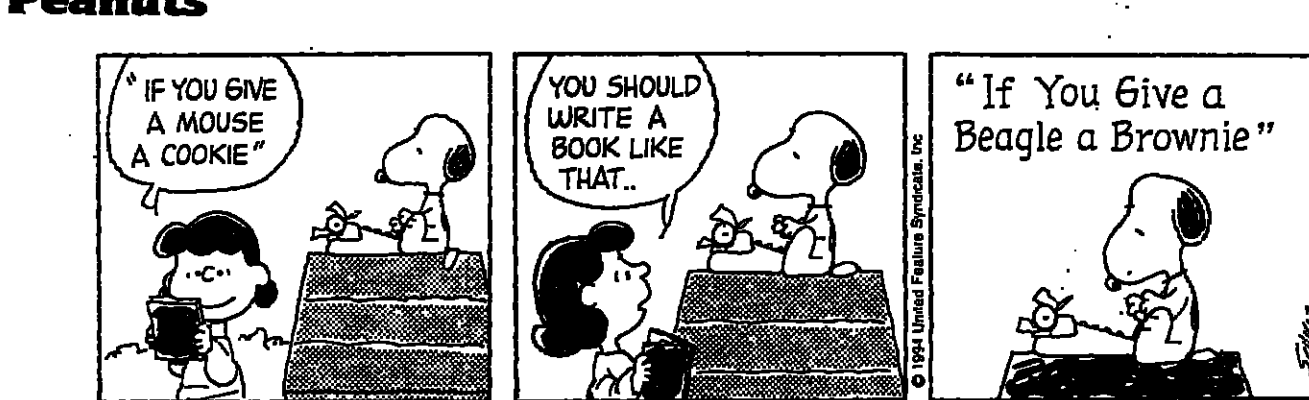


Print answer here: IN THE (Answers tomorrow)

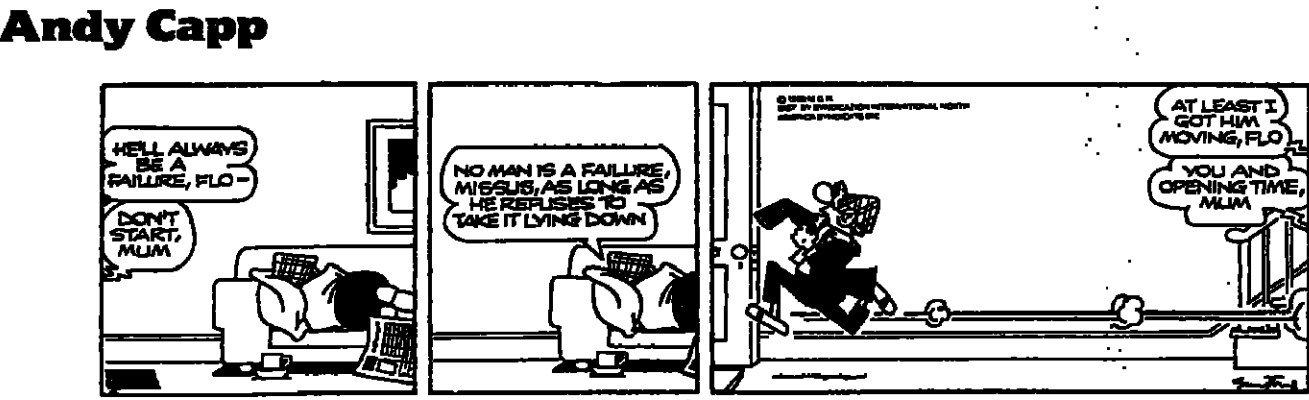
Yesterday's Jumble: POUND BLOOD BLUSH MIDDAY

Answer: What you like to hear best after dinner — "TLL BUY"

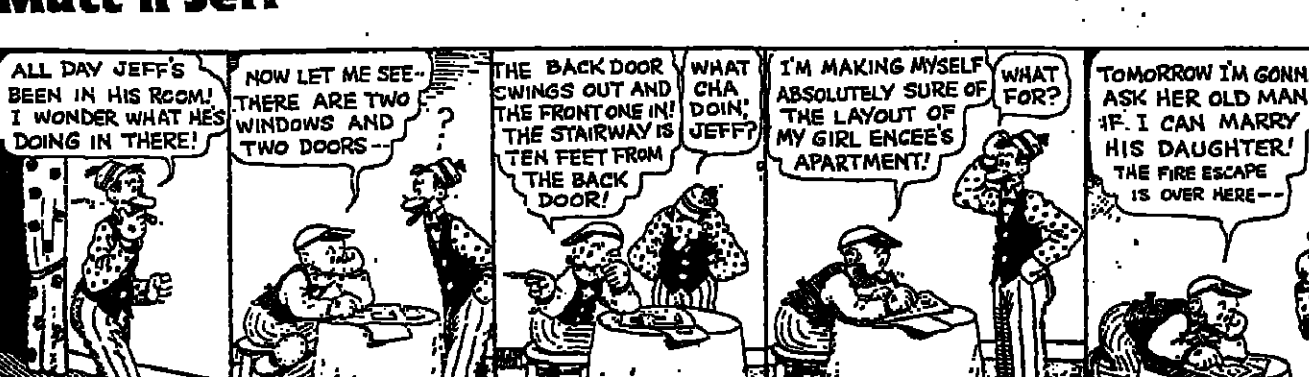
Peanuts



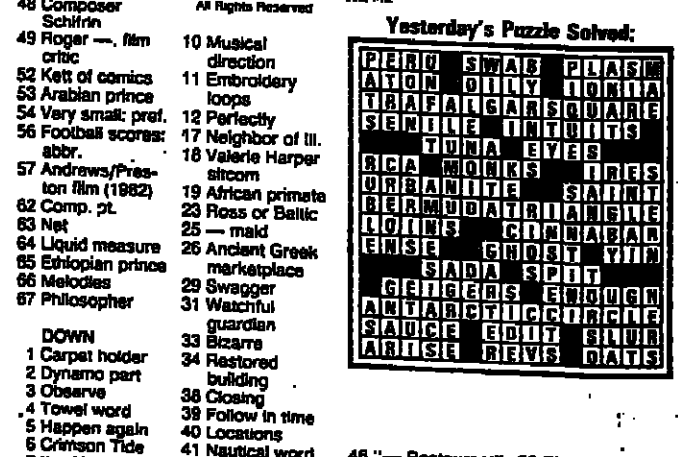
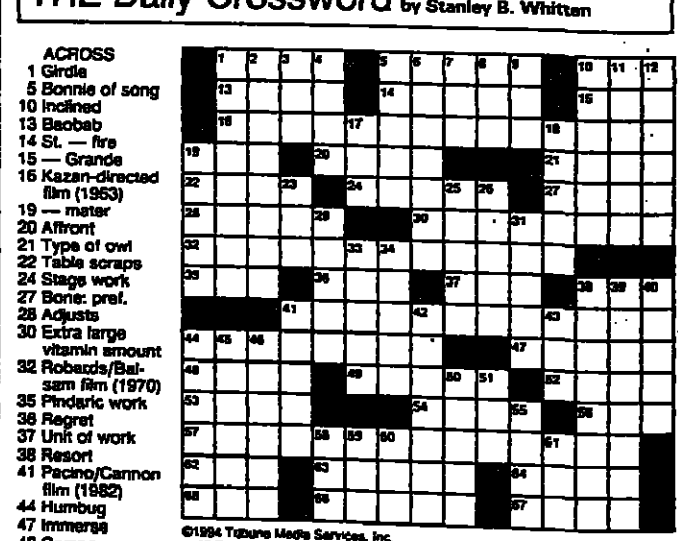
Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE Daily Crossword by Stanley B. Whittan



Yemen estimates gas reserves at 500b m³

DUBAI (R) — Yemen, a small oil producer which is trying to develop its natural gas resources, said gas reserves could be much more than 18 trillion cubic feet (500 billion cubic metres). Yemen's Oil Minister Saleh Abu Bakr Bin Hassan was quoted by the London-based Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper as saying 15 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves are located in Marib and three trillion cubic feet in Shabwah. "In addition to those

two fields there are other discoveries whose reserves are not yet established precisely. In any case, I think that gas reserves in Yemen are very large," the newspaper quoted him as saying in an interview. The newspaper quoted him as saying Yemen was discussing a programme with the U.S.'s Enron Corp. to pump about five million tonnes of gas a year to Oman, on the coast of Aden in the former South Yemen.

Fokker to slash another 1,900 jobs

AMSTERDAM (AFP) — Dutch aircraft manufacturer Fokker has announced that it was cutting 1,900 jobs and slashing production to around 40 planes a year.

A company spokesman said that the job losses would be "indirect," meaning jobs not involved directly in manufacturing, such as administrative, supervisory and management positions.

A restructuring plan will be discussed in the coming months with the trade unions. Employees expressed shock and called the move a "disaster."

The restructuring plan should be ready by the end of the month, and will then be discussed with unions and the shop committee, the company spokesman said. He noted that the most recent restructuring plan, announced last April, concerned 2,100 jobs but had resulted in the axing of only 1,500 positions as of last Dec. 31.

Fokker had about 9,000 employees at that time.

The firm said its hand had been forced by "even stronger competition among the constructors, the recession lasting longer than expected in the airline sector, and the poor financial results affecting those companies because of this."

It noted that "those poor results are leading the airlines to reduce transport capacity and hold back from replacing their old equipment."

It also said that to come up with the reductions in production costs that are now "inevitable," it will be necessary to "make manufacturing processes more efficient and more flexible, to lower the time for turning out planes." Some management positions will be done away with "to speed up decision-making and make decisions applicable."

Talks will be held with Fokker partners and suppliers to adapt contracts to today's market prices, the firm said.

Chinese peasants surviving on less than \$20 a year

BEIJING (AFP) — Deng Xiaoping's China may now have a host of millionaires but it also has 100 million poor, many of whom survive on less than \$20 a year, the China Youth daily said Tuesday.

Average income in 1992 for inhabitants of the small town of Qibailong, in the arid mountainous western area of the autonomous region of Guangxi, was 164 yuan (\$19), said the paper.

Fewer than 10 per cent of families in the town had more than \$34 to live on, said the paper which described the southern town as "one of the poorest places on earth."

About 2,000 people out of a population of 16,700 have been forced to seek work in towns further south to avoid starvation.

A few days ago regional officials decided to move 200,000 people from Guangxi who live in a state of poverty similar to that of Qibailong.

China has between 80 and 120 million needy people, according to the latest official and World Bank statistics.

About 25 million peasants live on the threshold of poverty which is set at \$23 a year and the official press has published a series of articles recently warning that some regions were becoming poorer due to a lack of solidarity between provinces.

Since China's economy began to surge ahead in 1992, the gap between rich and coastal provinces and the poorer interior regions has become wider.

The gap between town and country is also widening. Citizens have seen their incomes rise by around 10 per cent in 1993 while those of peasants have risen by only two per cent. Millions of country dwellers saw their standard of living fall in the past year.

Singapore port sets new record in container units handled

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Singapore's port, the world's second busiest container terminal after Hong Kong, achieved another record-breaking performance last year, according to preliminary statistics.

A Port of Singapore Authority (PSA) report said the total number of 20-foot equivalent unit (TEU) containers handled by the port exceeded nine million units for the first time.

The 9.04 TEUs handled last year was about 20 per cent more than the 7.5 million TEUs handled in the previous year. In 1991 the port handled 6.3 million TEUs, the report said.

Loaded containers amounted to 7.76 million units while 1.28 million TEUs were empty.

The nine million mark was achieved in December by the preliminary figures for the month accounting for 830,000 units, the highest handled in a single month in 1993.

PSA expects the final figure for the month of December 1993 to be slightly higher as the last three months of the year are usually its busiest period.

Despite its record-breaking performance in container handling, the Singapore port was still expected to finish behind the British colony, which has always edged Singapore for the top place in container cargo.

According to local press reports, Hong Kong handled 6.7 million TEUs for the first nine months of last year, a 16.2 per cent increase over the corresponding period in 1992. Growth in the last quarter of 1993 is expected to be stronger with the colony's port finishing ahead of Singapore again.

General cargo, including containerised and conventional, handled by the port here increased to 273.7 million tonnes last year, compared to 238.4 million tonnes in 1992.

Palestinians set first autonomy budget at \$600m

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The PLO has worked out a first budget of \$600 million to cover the running of the autonomous authority in the occupied territories this year, Palestinian economist Samir Abdallah told AFP.

The figures, calculated on the assumption that autonomy will be launched in March, allow for a \$158 million deficit.

Some \$280 million should be raised from direct taxation, said Mr. Abdallah, a member of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDR) set up by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to oversee the \$2 billion aid promised by donor countries for the five years of autonomy.

He noted that most of the deficit should be covered by \$120 million promised by donors for administrative affairs.

"This budget does not cover infrastructure or any development projects. This will be dealt with elsewhere," he noted.

PECDR advertised in Tuesday's Palestinian press 16 management jobs for the tax and finance departments in the future authority which is to run daily life in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Middle East Airlines needs \$100m to survive

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's national carrier Middle East Airlines (MEA) broke even in 1993 but needs \$100 million over the next three years to modernise its fleet and stay afloat, MEA Chairman Abdul Hamid Fakhoury said.

MEA wanted to borrow or lease three new planes this year, he told the bi-monthly Beirut business magazine Le Commerce du Levant.

Mr. Fakhoury said 1993 financial results were the airline's best since 1981 and it expected a 12 per cent increase in traffic this year.

But costs rose 100 per cent in 1993 and MEA expected more competition as world airlines reentered the Lebanese market. The best way to reduce costs was to modernise the fleet and a decision to increase capital to do so was needed if MEA was to survive, Mr. Fakhoury said. MEA is owned by the Lebanese government, Air France and Kuwait Airlines.

Mr. Fakhoury said the 1992 decision of the Lebanese government to make MEA a state monopoly indicated its intention to maintain the airline.

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close 14/2/94	Tokyo Close 15/2/94
Sterling Pound	1.4655	1.4635
Deutsche Mark	1.7245	1.7269
Swiss Franc	1.4550	1.4552
French Franc	5.8720	5.8920**
Japanese Yen	102.20	102.02
European Currency Unit	1.1233	1.1197**

USD Per SYR:
Open: 1500.00
Close: 1500.00

Previous Metals Date: 15/2/1994

Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm Metal USD/Oz JD/Gm

Gold 384.75 7.00 Silver 5.35 0.120

21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 15/2/1994

Currency Bid Offer

U.S. Dollar 0.6980 0.7000

Sterling Pound 1.0540 1.0592

Deutsche Mark 0.4033 0.4053

Swiss Franc 0.4786 0.4810

French Franc 0.1165 0.1191

Japanese Yen 0.6817 0.6851

Dutch Guilder 0.3597 0.3615

Swedish Krona *****

Italian Lira 0.0418 0.0420

Belgian Franc *****

Other Currencies Date: 15/2/1994

Currency Bid Offer

Bahraini Dinar 1.8320 1.8480

Lebanese Lira 0.040450 0.041575

Saudi Riyal 0.1658 0.1667

Kuwaiti Dinar 2.3360 2.3600

Qatari Riyal 0.1895 0.1905

Egyptian Pound 0.2050 0.2200

Omani Riyal 1.7900 1.8060

UAE Dirham 0.1695 0.1905

Greek Drachma 0.2685 0.3055

Cypriot Pound 1.3250 1.3650

Per 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3510/20	Canadian dollar
	1.7356/66	Deutschmarks
	1.9468/78	Dutch guilders
	1.4590/00	Swiss francs
	35.72/76	Belgian francs
	5.9025/75	French francs
	1680.82/3	Italian lire
	103.60/70	Japanese yen
	8.0108/08	Swedish crowns
	7.4835/85	Norwegian crowns
	6.7553/03	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4706/16	
One ounce of gold	\$383.90/384.40	

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S. Africa faces threat of secession

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa is faced with a real threat of secession by the KwaZulu black homeland and the surrounding province of Natal after all-race elections in April.

All three, grouped together in the Freedom Alliance, have rejected a new interim constitution hammered out in democracy talks and announced Saturday that they would not contest the poll.

"What the king and Buthelezi are looking for is not a federal state, but a confederal state," Mr. Lodge said.

"The government and the African National Congress (ANC) can't be completely dismissive of their claims because they are capable of doing a lot of harm," he said. "The fact that they can muster 40,000 armed men in the middle of Durban cannot be taken lightly."

Tony Leon of the Liberal Democratic Party feared King Zwelithini's demand would dash hopes for a peaceful election in Natal, where the IFP and the ANC are fighting a virtual civil war that claimed nearly 2,000 lives last year alone.

"His demand is perhaps an extreme reaction to isolation and exclusion that he and the IFP feel at this time," Mr. Leon said. "Whether it is a final or an opening bid to get reaction is unclear, but it has to be taken seriously."

"It will be impossible to have a proper election if we have a well organised section of the community preventing the process," he added.

The government is due to respond to the Zulu king's demands Thursday.

Kwazulu and IFP demands for self-rule under a sovereign monarch are not new.

In 1992, Mr. Buthelezi published a secessionist constitution for Kwazulu and Natal calling for the recognition of the authority of the Zulu king.

Listing the fundamental principles on which the IFP would not compromise earlier this month, Mr. Buthelezi included recognition of the Zulu monarchy and its sovereignty over Natal/Kwazulu.

In a report on Feb. 1, the Sowetan newspaper predicted that the Zulu king would declare Natal a sovereign monarchy, then decree that there be no elections on his territory.

The IFP officials told the newspaper that any attempt to invade Kwazulu would unleash armed resistance.

Mr. Lodge doubted that the threat of secession would succeed because Kwazulu, like the nine other black homelands, is almost totally dependent on the central government for funding, and Pretoria could easily strangle any attempt at a unilateral declaration of independence.

The youth wing of Inkatha Freedom Party said Tuesday it would start a campaign of defiance to South Africa's Transitional Executive Council (TEC).

"We are going to defy everything said and done by the TEC, unless they meet our demands," Inkatha Youth Brigade Publicity Secretary Zenzele Phakathi said by telephone from Ulundi, capital of the Kwazulu black homeland.

Mr. Phakathi said the youth

defiance campaign would be launched across South Africa by more than one million brigade members.

"We are trying to warn the TEC and President De Klerk's government that if they don't give in to our demands, they are leading the country to disaster," he said.

Youth Brigade members will also begin what he called a "voter education programme."

"We will be teaching people that there is a right not to vote."

The campaign would not result in violence, he added.

"I don't think it will lead to violence because we are a disciplined organisation," he said.

Meanwhile one woman was killed and a man was wounded when masked gunmen opened up with automatic rifle fire on a disco in South Africa's Natal province late Monday, South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) radio reported Tuesday.

A police spokesman told SABC the men fired through the security gates of the disco in the central Natal town of Newcastle on a crowd of about 25 revellers before fleeing by car.

The attack follows a similar one in Natal 10 days ago, when gunmen lobbed three handgrenades before opening fire on swimmers in a public pool in the east coast port city of Richards Bay, injuring one teenager.

Seven black men, including five suspected members of the hardline Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) were arrested.

University of the Witwatersrand, Carolyn Hamilton, said the Zulu kingdom disintegrated in civil war following a decisive defeat by British troops in 1879.

"There is no evidence to suggest that in the kingdom's lifetime a broad identity as 'Zulu' ever developed," she said. "The kingdom was not, as is commonly thought, a cohesive and united polity."

Ms. Hamilton said it was only in the 1920s, when blacks in Natal began to feel the effects of the white-dominated political and economic order, that a broad Zulu identity took root.

"Large numbers of Africans in Natal and Zululand became receptive to the idea that they needed to draw closer together to protect their own interests," she said.

In the past decade, there has been a high level of violence between Zulus supporting Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom

Aung San Suu Kyi is healthy — visitor

BANGKOK (R) — The first non-family visitor allowed to meet Burma's detained Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi in more than four years said he found her fit, healthy and happy to be a symbol for the Burmese people.

"She looks healthy. She is in the process right now of a very strict exercise, meditation regimen," U.S. Congressman William Richardson told the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) World Service Television.

Mr. Richardson, a New Mexico Democrat, and three others including a U.N. official based in Rangoon and a reporter from the New York Times, had a surprise four-hour meeting with Mr. Aung San Suu Kyi at her Rangoon home Monday.

She told her visitors she had no intention of leaving her homeland but was ready to negotiate with her jailers on other issues.

Burma's military rulers have said she could be released from house arrest any time she promised to leave Burma and to refrain from involvement in politics.

"She is not unhappy, she is content with the fact that she feels she is representing her people in this exile," Mr. Richardson said.

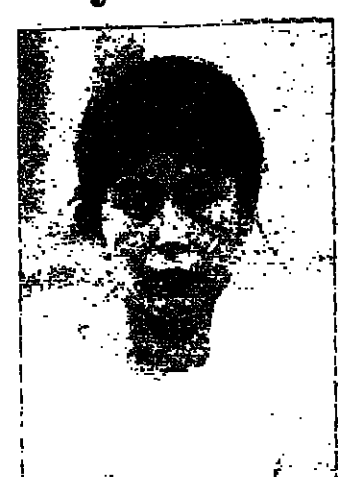
The New York Times reported Tuesday that Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi had said the government "had tried to pressure me to leave in ways no self-respecting government should try. The concept or driving somebody out of their country is totally unacceptable to me."

"Whatever they do to me, I can take it," she was quoted by the Times as saying.

The 48-year-old opposition politician has been held at her lakeside house since detained by the military government in July, 1989.

Mr. Richardson said that despite his visit and other signs of loosening up, the ruling junta, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), still held many other political prisoners.

He echoed the views of di-



Aung San Suu Kyi

plomats in the area who warned that the visit did not mean the repressive junta had necessarily changed its spots.

"The message there is they (the regime) obviously want to loosen some things up. Hopefully this will lead to a discussion between the two," Mr. Richardson said.

"I do agree that the SLORC — the existing government — has made some positive steps recently but, again, we have to wait and see... we also have a lot of other thousands of political prisoners," he said.

Speculation in diplomatic circles that Mr. Richardson was due to meet Aung San Suu Kyi for a second time Tuesday could not be immediately confirmed by the U.S. embassy in Rangoon.

Until Monday's visit, Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi had met no outsiders except her husband, British academic Michael Aris, and their two teenage sons, since her July 1989 detention.

Her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), convincingly won 1990 elections that SLORC held after forming in September, 1988, in the wake of the military's crushing of a nationwide pro-democracy uprising.

But it then ignored the result and systematically eradicated all forms of opposition, throwing thousands of pro-democracy politicians and activists into prison.

"It must be very exhausting for them to go on lying. Elections were promised elections were held. The people feel

cheated," she told the Times.

Mr. Richardson Tuesday visited Insein Jail, where Burma holds a number of political prisoners, before paying a second call on Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi.

Mr. Richardson and the United Nations Development Programme resident representative in Rangoon, Jehan Raheem, were the first people outside Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi's immediate family to be allowed to see her.

Mr. Raheem also accompanied Mr. Richardson to Insein Jail Tuesday, witnesses said.

Mr. Richardson met Burma's powerful intelligence chief, Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Monday and was scheduled to meet senior SLORC officials again Tuesday before leaving for Bangkok in the evening.

The Richardson visit came amid mounting speculation about a possible easing in the SLORC's attitude to Aung San Suu Kyi.

A Japanese journalist who visited Burma in mid-January reported she might be freed in July. Burmese sources and foreign diplomats dismissed the report as a misunderstanding.

A few days later, Burmese authorities pulled the guards from outside her home on Inya Lake, although guards remained on duty inside the compound.

Australia has urged the Burmese government to follow up on its easing of restrictions on Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi by releasing her.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said he hoped the visit would lead to her immediate and unconditional release and he urged Burma to release all other political detainees early.

Burma's deputy intelligence chief told visiting Japanese journalists Tuesday Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi will remain under house arrest until 1995.

Colonel Kyaw Win said that the security act under which Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi was held came into effect only in July 1990, and the previous year of detention was considered an "arrest period."

Sting gets rock award

LONDON (AFP) — Internationally-acclaimed pop star Sting, former lead singer with the group The Police, was named best British male solo artist here at the prestigious Brit Awards ceremony.

Top-selling pop band Take That and Irish singer-songwriter Van Morrison were also honored at the event celebrating the best of the rock and pop industry held at London's Alexandra Palace.

Morrison received a special award for his contribution to the British record industry. His award was presented by former Beatle John McCartney who said that one of the things he remembered most from his years in captivity was fellow Beatle Brian Epstein singing Morrison's songs while they were chained to a wall. The accolade for best single of the year went to northern England band Take That for its song "Prayer," a number one hit in Britain last year which helped confirm the group's position as one of the best-selling bands in the world.

Highest-selling album of 1993 was *Out of the Box: The Best of the Police* by U.S. veteran star Meatloaf.

Jackson sings on witness stand

DENVER (AP) — Michael Jackson snapped his fingers and sang a couple of verses from his megahit *Billie Jean* Monday while testifying in a federal copyright infringement lawsuit over the song *Dangerous*.

The American pop star was the first witness to testify Monday as the second week of the civil trial began. The case may go to the eight-member jury later in the day. Smiling and appearing confident, Jackson sang parts of *Billie Jean*, which was released on his decade-old *Thriller* album, to illustrate the composing process. He said he wrote the lyrics for *Dangerous* while sitting in the dark and listening to the bass track of another of his songs, *Street Walker*. "I like to sing in the dark, Jackson said during his 50 minutes of testimony. "I don't like people looking at me unless I'm on stage."

Dangerous was the title track of the album that Jackson released in 1992. He copyrighted the song in February 1992, but his lawyers said he first recorded it in 1990. Jackson said he couldn't remember when he first recorded the song. The album sold 14 million copies. The pop superstar rolled into the Denver Federal Courthouse in a gray van with tinted windows, avoiding reporters. Jackson reportedly was flown to Denver Sunday on a private jet.

Man bites dog

MOSCOW (R) — A man seized an Alsatian dog that jumped at him in a park in a Ukrainian city and bit it to death in front of its owner, ITAR-TASS news agency said Monday. ITAR-TASS said the dog, named Elsa, may have been aroused by a strong smell of alcohol emanating from the 37-year-old man as he walked through the park in Dnepropetrovsk. When Elsa pounced, the man sank his teeth into the dog's throat.

U.S. navy ship rescues 'sheepwreck'

DUBAI (R) — A U.S. Navy frigate enforcing U.N. sanctions against Iraq went into action to save 700 sheep on a ship drifting in the Arabian Sea, the navy said Monday. The USS Curtis, accompanying the aircraft carrier USS Independence whose planes patrol Iraq, towed the Indian livestock vessel *Shah Al Hasan* to safety Saturday, the U.S. Navy said Monday. The freighter had been adrift for 15 days with no food and little water when it was found by the Curtis about 100 miles southeast of Oman. The crew of 23 ran up a makeshift sail after the engine failed on a voyage from Somalia to Dubai.

Closing the barn door after the horse has bolted

OSLO (R) — Norway's National Gallery has tightened security and replaced windows with stronger glass after thieves stole one of the world's most famous paintings, *The Scream* by Edvard Munch. The painting was priceless. Norwegian media said the robbers left a note which read: "Thanks for the poor security." The gallery also placed a 24-hour guard in the rooms of the special Munch exhibition.

S. African historians question Zulu claims on Natal

JOHANNESBURG (R) — King Goodwill Zwelithini's claim of an independent monarchy in Natal based on the kingdom founded there by the Zulu warrior hero Shaka in the 19th century is open to dispute, according to South African historians.

King Goodwill and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, chief minister of the Kwazulu black homeland, demanded of President F.W. de Klerk Monday that present-day Natal province including Kwazulu be hived off from the post-apartheid South Africa.

"A lot of people have family histories and they know what really happened," Mary De Haas, an anthropologist at the University of Natal in Durban, said Tuesday. "They would certainly dispute the king's version."

Along with right wing Afrikaners seeking a white homeland, the king and Mr. Buthelezi have rejected an in-

terim constitution thrashed out in two years of democracy talks and plan to boycott the country's first all-race elections in April.

The king and Mr. Buthelezi argued in their submission to Mr. De Klerk that the Zulu kingdom had existed since its creation by Shaka, who reigned for 12 years before his assassination in 1828.

"There was a great period of history in which our great founding father King Shaka... founded the mightiest kingdom and empire the whole of southern and central Africa had ever seen," Mr. Buthelezi said.

But Ms. De Haas said the Zulu kingdom fell apart after the death of Shaka. While it existed, its core remained in the northern half of what is now Natal.

"To say the kingdom encompasses all of the province is a weak historical claim," she said.

An authority on Shaka at the

University of the Witwatersrand, Carolyn Hamilton, said the Zulu kingdom disintegrated in civil war following a decisive defeat by British troops in 1879.

"There is no evidence to suggest that in the kingdom's lifetime a broad identity as 'Zulu' ever developed," she said. "The kingdom was not, as is commonly thought, a cohesive and united polity."

Ms. Hamilton said it was only in the 1920s, when blacks in Natal began to feel the effects of the white-dominated political and economic order, that a broad Zulu identity took root.

"Large numbers of Africans in Natal and Zululand became receptive to the idea that they needed to draw closer together to protect their own interests," she said.

In the past decade, there has been a high level of violence between Zulus supporting Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom

Party and those backing Nelson Mandela's African National Congress, the party tipped to win the April elections.

Natal was the site of the outbreak of hostilities 10 years ago between Inkatha and the ANC. Since then about 18,000 blacks have died in political violence throughout the country.

Ms. Hamilton said the memory of Shaka was invoked by those who wanted to mobilize Zulus along ethnic lines because he symbolised the creation of order out of chaos.

Ms. De Haas, in a recent academic paper written with fellow-researcher Paulus Zulu, said Buthelezi's plans for a highly autonomous Zulu state were unrealistic.

"While Natal is ethnically homogenous, rifts in political culture are so serious that it has become the Lebanon of South Africa," their paper said.

N. Korea resumes talks with IAEA

VIENNA (R) — North Korean diplomats resumed talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Tuesday over inspection of the hardline Communist state's nuclear sites.

An IAEA spokesman said a first round of talks took place Tuesday morning, breaking three weeks of deadlock, and a second round was fixed for later in the day at the U.N. watchdog agency.

"The discussions are under way again," IAEA spokesman David Kyd said.

North Korea's envoy to the IAEA, Yun Ho-Jin, met officials of the agency's division for the first time since negotiations broke down on Jan. 25.

North Korea's Stalinist government has refused to allow inspections of seven declared nuclear sites for the past year. Talks with the IAEA, the U.N. agency charged with enforcing international safeguards against the spread of nuclear weapons, stalled after

the two sides were unable to agree terms.

The IAEA boards of governors is expected to declare Pyongyang in breach of its obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) at a meeting next week unless North Korea agree to inspections.

Meanwhile North Korea's absolute leader Kim Il-Sung is believed to have proposed a meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton amid the mounting crisis over North Korea's suspected nuclear arms programme, it was reported Tuesday.

Mr. Kim made the proposal through U.S. Southern Baptist Evangelist Billy Graham, who met the North Korean president and party chief when he visited Pyongyang in late January. Japan's Jiji Press quoted official South Korean sources as saying.

The sources said that Mr. Kim had offered to hold a meeting of working-level U.S. and North Korean officials in

New York to arrange an exchange of emissaries as the initial steps towards talks between Mr. Kim and Mr. Clinton.

In a separate development, six members of the U.S. Congress defence subcommittee left for Washington Tuesday after a three-day unadvertised fact-finding mission in South Korea related to the North Korean nuclear impasse, the U.S. embassy said.

The six, led by Democrat John Murtha, head of the Defense Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee, were to report to President Clinton on their return, an embassy official told AFP.

During the visit, which started Sunday, the group met with South Korean Defence Minister Rhee Byung-Tae, Acting Foreign Minister Hong Soon-Young, Senior Presidential Secretary for Security Affairs Chung Chong-Wook and U.S. embassy and military officials, he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Irish Protestants step up attacks

BELFAST (R) — A string of thwarted attacks using bombs hidden in St. Valentine's Day chocolate boxes has left Northern Irish Catholics afraid of an upturn in sectarian violence against them. British army experts defused one bomb early Tuesday. It had been left in a heart-shaped tin in front of a house in a Catholic area of West Belfast that is an Irish Nationalist stronghold. On Monday an elderly Catholic woman picked up a similar chocolate box and a bouquet of flowers from her doorstep. Her son, suspicious after hearing of an earlier failed St. Valentine's bombing, threw the box out of a window into the back garden where it exploded.

Australia recognises Macedonia

CANBERRA (R) — Australia recognised the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Tuesday, but said the country needs to change its flag before it can set up a consulate in the Australian capital. "Our early agreement to the opening of a consulate would be much assisted by a statement on the public record by the government of (Macedonia) that it is prepared to act immediately, or at least as soon as the necessary legislative majority is achievable, to change the country's flag," Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said. Greece and Macedonia have been embroiled in disputes over borders, flags and the republic's name since Macedonia was formed following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. The Macedonian flag currently includes the Star of Vergina, a nationalist symbol that Greece finds offensive.

U.S. backs new plan for Haiti

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States has thrown its weight behind a new plan to end the crisis in Haiti despite the clear reservations of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, administration officials said Monday. The plan calls for the formation of a broad-based government that could command a parliamentary majority which could then set into motion a political process leading eventually to Mr. Aristide's return. The plan is being spearheaded by members of a Haitian parliamentary delegation which has been visiting the United States for the past week.

Patten fails to win Aussie support

SYDNEY (AFP) — Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten left a meeting with Prime Minister Paul Keating Tuesday without winning Australia's public endorsement of Britain's drive for greater democracy in the colony. But Mr. Patten said that since he didn't come to Australia seeking Mr. Keating's support, he was not disappointed and was delighted with what he described as "an extremely satisfactory meeting." Talks lasting 75 minutes at the prime minister's official residence in Sydney ranged over bilateral trade links, regional issues such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group and Hong Kong's future after the British colony reverts to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. Mr. Patten, who is on a six-day visit to Mr. Keating's invitation, told reporters his visit was aimed primarily at persuading even more Australian businesses to use Hong Kong as a springboard to China.

Hurd: Tories would not be 'silly' enough to change leader

LONDON (AFP) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Tuesday he believed the Conservative Party would not be "silly" enough to change its leader Prime Minister John Major because of unrest that would cause.

In an interview with the Independent newspaper, Mr. Hurd warned that further back-biting and disunity among the ranks would cause as much long-term damage to conservatism as had been done to the opposition Labour Party in the past.

Mr. Hurd, who is the cabinet's senior statesman, said party-members who had real differences over policy were entitled to make their views known, but the damaging phase of "chattering" had to be brought to an end.

Mr. Hurd said he did not believe the Tories would

change their leader before the next general election, saying "I think it would be so silly that it won't happen."

"The shock of what happened in 1990 (when Mr. Major replaced Margaret Thatcher after a leadership coup) is still quite strong among active Conservatives and I think the idea of that happening again would horrify them so it would be crazy."

Speaking shortly before flying out to join the prime minister who is visiting Russia, Mr. Hurd also urged the Tory party to unite over Europe, particularly in the run-up to June's Euro-elections.

"We should now put forward as a united party our idea of what Europe should be," he told prospective Tory candidates for the European Parliament in London.

India throws open doors to Kashmir to counter Pakistan

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India has launched a campaign designed to counter Pakistani charges of human rights abuses in Kashmir by throwing open the doors to the northern state gripped by a Muslim separatist rebellion.

Indian Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh announced Monday on his return from a visit to three European capitals that Amnesty International would be allowed into the Himalayan territory claimed by both India and Pakistan.

The announcement came just days after New Delhi gave the green light to the International Committee of the Red Cross to visit Kashmir and on the heels of a trip to the state by a team of European diplomats.

The ambassadors to India of Belgium, the European Community, Germany and Greece spent six days in Kashmir last week for a first-hand assess-

ment of the situation in the valley torn by nearly five years of separatist strife.

They visited Srinagar, the urban hub of the Muslim rebellion against Indian rule, and other towns, met Kashmiri Muslims and also toured the refugee camps of Kashmiri Hindus forced to flee their homes.

Speaking to a parliamentary commission here following his trip to Brussels, London and Paris, Mr. Singh said Amnesty would be allowed to send teams to Kashmir on a "case-by-case" basis.

"We are following (a policy of) greater transparency on Kashmir," the foreign minister said.

"There is a danger that the separatist and terrorist groups would utilise such visits to put on dramatic shows for the visitors and for the media, but the transparency should be continued," he said.

Thai ferry death toll reaches 43

RANOTH, Thailand (R) — Authorities Tuesday called off a search for more bodies from a boat that capsized in a southern Thai river while ferrying illegal Burmese workers home, although dozens more victims are thought to be in the water.

"A Burmese colonel on a joint border committee told us they do not intend to follow this accident up and said we

could deal with it as we saw fit, so all we can do is bury the bodies and close the case," a police officer supervising the search told Reuters.

Rescue workers recovered the body of a Burmese boy in the river Tuesday, bringing the known death toll to 43.

The unidentified body of the boy, who was about eight years old, was buried in an un-

marked grave along with the other 42 victims, whose corpses were placed in mass graves at a charity foundation site.

Gravediggers said 16 girls and four boys were among the victims buried there.

"It's normal practice for Burmese workers to sneak in and out from here. When they die nobody cares about them," a local businessman said.

India's now-retired Foreign Secretary Jyotindra Nath Dixit met senior Pakistani officials in Islamabad during the first week of January but the talks failed to produce any breakthrough.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars since independence over Kashmir.

India, which holds the southern two-thirds of Kashmir, accuses Pakistan, which holds the northern third, of arming and training Muslim militants.

Pakistan denies the charges but provides diplomatic and moral support to what it describes as a legitimate struggle for self-determination.

Meanwhile, Pandit Hindus, the largest minority in mainly Muslim Kashmir, complained Monday that Muslim militants had driven nearly all Hindus from the Kashmir Valley with a brutal campaign of "ethnic cleansing."

Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao urged visiting U.S. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan to return to the negotiating table.

"It is for friends of Pakistan such as the USA to persuade it to sit with India to discuss all issues affecting bilateral relations including the Kashmir problem," Mr. Rao told Gen. Moynihan here Monday.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Italian aid workers freed in Somalia

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Two Italian aid workers kidnapped in Somalia were freed Tuesday after 48 hours in captivity, Italian officials said in the capital Mogadishu. Their release was confirmed in Rome by Italian Defence Minister Fabio Fabbri. The two, Sergio Passadore, 38, and Gianfranco Stefani, 46, were agricultural aid agency CEFA, were freed in Jowhar, about 150 kilometres north of Mogadishu. Gunmen abducted the two in Jowhar on Sunday and demanded a \$50,000 ransom which diplomats said was not paid. Their kidnapping brought to five the number of foreigners abducted in Somalia in the past week. All of them, including two British men, are of parliament, have been freed.

Campaign launched to 'protect' settlements

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Settler leaders launched a campaign Tuesday to recruit volunteers to ensure the survival of all Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, after two ministers urged the removal of an isolated colony. "This call is issued to Israelis who don't live in (the West Bank) or Gaza to come and defend any settlement threatened by the government," Shai Bazak, spokesman for the settlers' council, told AFP. "Our aim is to have a lot of thousands of people ready to turn out immediately to oppose physically the evacuation of settlements," he said. Mr. Bazak said there was no question of fighting, only of passive resistance such as lying on the ground.

Rafsanjani nominates moderate as minister

NICOSIA (AP) — A French-trained engineer was nominated Tuesday as Iran's new minister of culture and Islamic guidance, the country's equivalent of an information minister. Tehran's state-run news agency said. The official Islamic Republic News Agency, monitored in Cyprus, said the nomination of Mustafa Mirsalim by President Hashemi Rafsanjani was expected to meet with parliament's approval when it considers the nomination Sunday. Mr. Mirsalim replaces Ali Larijani, who was shifted to the post of head of radio and television on Sunday, taking over from Mr. Rafsanjani's brother Mohammad Hashemi, who was in charge of Iranian broadcasting for 13 years. Mr. Hashemi has been appointed deputy foreign minister.

Israeli navy seizes Lebanese fishermen

TYRE, Lebanon (AFP) — The Israeli navy abducted at dawn Tuesday five fishermen in Lebanese territorial waters and towed their boats towards Israel, fishermen here said. The five were on board two boats just south of the port of Tyre when an Israeli gunboat intercepted them, a fisherman who was in the vicinity said. He charged that members of Israel's proxy militia manning a position overlooking Tyre opened fire at the fishermen at the same time but there were no casualties. The Israeli navy patrols the waters of South Lebanon, intercepting boats and seizing travellers or fishermen for questioning as part of operations to check for resistance fighters.

Jewish agency chief indicted for fraud

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Simcha Dinitz, the powerful head of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organisation, has been indicted for fraud for allegedly fiddling \$20,000 worth of expenses. Mr. Dinitz, a former Israeli ambassador to Washington, began leave of absence on Tuesday after attorney general Michael Ben Yair announced that formal charges were being pressed after two years of investigations. The 64-year-old Labour Party nominee who held the post for four years faces up to five years in jail. The Jewish Agency, a para-governmental body, oversees immigration to Israel and concentrates on work inside the country while the World Zionist Organisation focuses on the diaspora.

Russia executes 'Rostov ripper' killer

MOSCOW (R) — Russia has executed serial killer Andrei Chikatilo, convicted of 52 murders in three former Soviet republics during a 12-year rampage, Interfax news agency said on Tuesday. Chikatilo, known as the "Rostov Ripper," was shot on Monday in the southern region of Rostov-on-Don after President Boris Yeltsin rejected an appeal for clemency. The agency said. The former teacher was found guilty of raping and murdering 21 boys aged between eight and 16, 14 girls aged between nine and 17, and 17 older women in Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan strating in 1978. He was finally arrested in 1990. At this trial, relatives of his victims fainting as the horrific details of his crimes were read out to a stunned courtroom.

Iraq not complying, Havel tells Kuwaitis

KUWAIT (R) — Czech President Vaclav Havel said in Monday Iraq had "regrettably" failed to implement all U.N. resolutions concerning its 1990 invasion and seven-month occupation of Kuwait. Mr. Havel said he had discussed Iraq, Bosnia and Russia with the Emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, in cordial and friendly talks on a brief working visit on his way home from a tour of India and Thailand. Mr. Havel said he reiterated during the four-hour visit that the Czech Republic considered Iraq had "regrettably" failed to implement all U.N. war ceasefire resolutions. "We still place emphasis on the need for Iraq to fulfil the requirements laid down in the U.N. resolutions which Iraq regrettably has failed to do so far," he told a news conference before departing.

Turkish ship attacked by pirates

DJIBOUTI (AFP) — Pirates have attacked a Turkish cargo ship off the coast of Somalia, stripping the vessel of all its equipment and robbing the crew of their personal belongings. A Turkish official said here Monday. Aden Chideh Robleh, Turkey's honorary consul to Djibouti, said the attack occurred last Thursday shortly after the Castor-Malta left Djibouti for the Somali port of Berbera where it was to load a cargo of live-stock for a Somali merchant. Mr. Robleh said about three hours after leaving Djibouti, the ship was approached off the coast of Saylac by a speedboat with six armed pirates on board. He said the pirates, who came from Somaliland, the secessionist republic in northwest Somalia, forced the ship to head towards the coastline where it ran aground and then boarded the vessel taking everything possible, including the personal belongings of the 10 crew members, before fleeing. The crew had to use a lifeboat to reach Djibouti two days later.

British MP quits bench over Somalia visit

LONDON (AFP) — Politician Tony Worthington has resigned from the Labour Party's front bench, apparently because his visit to Somalia was not sanctioned by the party. Labour leader John Smith had accepted Mr. Worthington's resignation "with regret," a party spokesman said Monday. It follows a meeting at the House of Commons between party whips and Mr. Worthington — whose overseas trip was highly publicised after he was briefly detained by Somali gunmen with the Conservative member of parliament for Somerset and Frome in south-west England, Mark Robinson. Labour Party whips expressed anger last week that Mr. Worthington, 52, had visited Somalia in apparent defiance of party orders. Overseas trips with Tony MPs are banned for Labour MPs in the current state of non-cooperation between the two parties. "Mr. Worthington submitted a letter of resignation saying that because of the distress he had caused the party, and because party discipline is of paramount importance, with regret he had submitted his resignation," a Labour Party spokesman said Monday.

U.N. probe finds Croats behind village massacre

By Suhair Obekhat
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A massacre of the civilian population of the village of Stupni Do on Oct. 23, 1993, was carried out by troops of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), a United Nations report said Tuesday.

The report, released in New York and made available to the Jordan Times by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), includes the results of an investigation undertaken by the military police of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) based on extensive interviews with the survivors of the massacre, as well as on-site investigation and photographic evidence.

The report concludes that Stupni Do, a small, predominantly Bosnian Muslim village two kilometres from the town of Vares, was attacked by the HVO from Kiseljak, Travnik and Kakanj under the command of Ivica Rajic.

So far, 23 victims have been clearly identified. A further 13 villagers of Stupni Do are unaccounted for and presumed dead, bringing the preliminary total number of victims to 36, the report said.

Most of the 193 survivors spoke of women being raped and a 54-year-old man being killed by automatic machinegun fire because "he possessed no money or valuables to hand over."

The village was attacked because its residents refused to hand over their weapons and submit to the HVO, which controls the villages surrounding Stupni Do.

To carry out the attack, HVO used small arms and anti-aircraft gunfire and many witnesses noted the apparent use of incendiary bullets by the attacking forces "as shells landing in the village set houses on fire," the report said.

Repeated attempts by the UNPROFOR to enter the village were consistently blocked by the HVO brigade,

which threatened the force with rocket-propelled grenade anti-tank weapons, small arms and barriers of anti-tank mines.

Two days following the attack, UNPROFOR troops were allowed to enter Stupni Do to find an empty village with all 52 houses burned down. Fourteen bodies were discovered, four men and three women were identified, but the rest were burnt, beyond recognition, the report said.

Two bodies were found to have crushed skulls and some appeared to have been burned on the top of destroyed houses. There were also several dead cattle lying about, many also burnt, and a strong odor of burnt flesh was in the air, the report added.

In describing the incident, many "witnesses stated that the HVO attackers were wearing black uniforms with white bands on the left shoulder or green camouflage uniforms," said the report. "Some had camouflaged

faces and HVO patches, while others had no identifying marks. Those wearing black uniforms also wore black baseball caps and were suspected to be members of an HVO "death squad" or special forces unit from Kiseljak. One survivor believed that HVO from Vares and the Babovac brigade from Kiseljak took revenge on Stupni Do as a reprisal for Bih Armija offensives in the region, in particular in Kakanj. With only two exceptions, none of the witnesses recognized any of the HVO soldiers as being from the local area, nor did they hear names being used, other than nicknames.

Several female survivors from Stupni Do stated that they had been raped by HVO soldiers during the attack. Others reported being robbed of their valuables and, in one case, of a 54-year-old grandfather being killed by automatic machine-gun fire because he possessed no money or valuables to hand over.

Several survivors also reported that they had witnessed the killing of three disabled and unarmed men found in one of the community shelters and the machine-gunning to death of a 56-year-old woman who had complained of a sore leg. One survivor also recounted hiding in a family basement with three other women and being discovered by some HVO soldiers who, on entering the basement and inquiring if anyone was present, shot the three women who were offering to surrender. The report said that investigations are continuing in order to gain as much evidence as possible "with a view to identifying the perpetrators for eventual trial before the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991."

Policeman shot dead in Assiyut

ASSIYUT, Egypt (Agencies) — Suspected militants shot dead a policeman and wounded another as they went to work on Tuesday in the troubled Assiyut province of southern Egypt, police said.

Security forces launched a search for the killers, who were believed to be members of the outlawed Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah.

The shooting in the town of Badari came a day after police in Cairo shot dead three militants, including the head of the Gamaa's armed wing, Sawat Haggag.

A total of 109 policemen have been killed since the Gamaa began its campaign against President Hosni Mubarak's government two years ago, two-thirds of them in the Assiyut area.

Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry played down two reported attacks on Monday. The shooting of a bus carrying Roman engineers was aimed at the company, which had recently laid off workers, and not the passengers, who escaped unhurt, the ministry said.

And a blast which wounded seven passers-by in a shopping centre in the northern town of Tanta was caused by a wartime shell, it said.

The ministry also criticised news agencies for encouraging the Gamaa by carrying its statements.

The group has issued a series of threats against foreigners, bank depositors and investors. It stepped up its operations after seven of its members were killed by police in Cairo two weeks ago. It claimed that the men were shot in cold blood.

Almost 300 people have been killed in the two-year battle between the militants and security forces.

In Monday's incident, Egyptian police killed three wanted militants in a brief gunbattle during a raid on a flat in Cairo, security sources said.

The militants were members of the Gamaa, they said. Police went to the flat in the poor southern quarters of Sayyeda Zeinab to arrest the three men, who were close to seven militants shot dead in a police raid in the northern suburb of Al Zaway Al Hamra on Feb. 1, the sources added.

One security source named the leader of the three as Haggag, a Gamaa member wanted in connection with several acts of violence including an attack on Austrian tourists in old Cairo on Dec. 27. The police stormed the flat shortly after dusk, when most Cairenes are at home this month breaking the Ramadan fast.

The Egyptian authorities have gone on the offensive against the militants this month, rounding up hundreds of them across the country, especially in parts of Cairo and in Assiyut, a Gamaa stronghold.

Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi has said the government intends to wipe out all "terrorists" — the official term for members of the violent Islamist groups.

The Gamaa has threatened to carry out seven operations in revenge for the raid on the Zaway Al Hamra flat.



Israeli soldiers guard in a jeep Palestinian youths, one of them injured in the head, arrested on Tuesday during clashes in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Juppe urges Israel to freeze settlement and free prisoners

GAZA CITY, Occupied Gaza Strip (Agencies) — French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe on Tuesday urged Israel to free Palestinian prisoners and halt the spread of Jewish settlements to boost Palestinian autonomy.

He announced that Paris would grant the Palestinians an extra \$10 million dollars for 1994.

"Settlement must be frozen, family reunification allowed and prisoners freed and rehabilitated," Mr. Juppe told reporters after meeting Palestinian delegations first in East Jerusalem and then Gaza City.

France supported Palestinian self-determination, as it has done for 25 years, said Mr. Juppe, the first French minister to visit the occupied Gaza Strip.

"Our position is clear: We want the published timetable (for autonomy) to be followed because if the peace process is delayed it risks being bogged down."

"Confidence building measures are also needed, as I told the Israeli authorities, and the ties between Israel and France allow us to demand them."

The fate of the 11,000 Palestinians still in Israeli jails

is under discussion at the autonomy negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba.

Mr. Juppe, on the third and final day of his visit, said Paris would help rehabilitate prisoners, he added.

His calls came after he pledged to step up military and political ties with Israel in talks Monday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

In Gaza, the Palestinian delegation was led by local Fatah leader Zakaria Al Agha and Haidar Abdulla Shafi, former head of the Palestinian delegation to the Washington peace talks.

Dr. Abdul Shafi asked France to pressure Israel into ending human rights violations, freeing prisoners, freezing settlement and implementing the Sept. 13 autonomy agreement.

Tuesday morning in East Jerusalem he met a delegation led by Faisal Hussein, the head of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement in the occupied West Bank.

The French foreign minister said he urged both Israel and

the Palestinians to stick to their timetable to implement autonomy as quickly as possible.

"Time works for those who want the peace plan to fail," Mr. Juppe told the news conference before leaving Israel after a three-day visit.

"Failure would be a catastrophe," he said.

In the interests of making the plan succeed, Mr. Juppe said France would establish a cultural centre in Jericho, expected to be the seat of Palestinian autonomy, and help set up Palestinian television broadcasting facilities.

During his visit to the Gaza Strip without any Israeli security escort, Mr. Juppe met with nine senior Palestinian officials who complained that Israel was undermining the peace process through continued settlement activity, doing little to alleviate economic problems caused by preventing Palestinians from working in Israel nor easing housing problems.

"To make peace and autonomy succeed we have to change daily life in the occupied territories, where it is often difficult," Mr. Juppe said.

Wobbling ceasefire in Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — A four-day truce between warring factions officially began Tuesday, but artillery rounds blasted the perimeter of Defence Ministry compound in the besieged capital.

In neighbouring Pakistan, the United Nations said there were food shortages in Kabul that could turn into a famine unless the fighting stopped and the international community stepped in to help.

Tuesday marked the fifth anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, but the Central Asian nation remains mired in a war that shows no signs of ending.

The top military commander of Uzbek forces in Kabul said Tuesday peaceful negotiations are preferable but fighting is inevitable if President Burhanuddin Rabbani does not resign.

"We are against war and prefer a peaceful solution through negotiation, but if this fails we will continue to fight," General Rahmatullah Raoufi told AFP.

"We have the military means to capture Kabul," said Gen. Raoufi, but stressed that the key to the end of the factional hostilities is Mr. Rabbani's unconditional resignation.

Gen. Raoufi, an ethnic Pushtun, heads the Kabul forces of Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum. The general, in alliance with Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's predominantly Pushtun Hezb-e-Islami faction, has been fighting pro-Rabbani troops.

Meanwhile, amid the temporary lull in fighting, scores of civilians were seen evacuating the old Microrayon housing estate which is a frontline between Dostum forces and Rabbani troops.

There was calm Tuesday in the war-battered capital, where the fighting since the start of the new year has left hundreds of people dead and an estimated 16,000 injured.

No one, however, acknowledged a temporary ceasefire was formally operative.

In Pakistan, the Frontier Post daily cited Mr. Hekmatyar as telling it by telephone that a four-day ceasefire was in effect to support the peace efforts of Jalaluddin Haqqani, an important leader who heads a mediation team in Kabul.

But Mr. Hekmatyar, who is based in Charasiab on the outskirts south of Kabul, said there could be no permanent ceasefire until Mr. Rabbani quits, adding that he himself would also step down as prime minister.

Mr. Raoufi denied allegations by the state that Gen. Dostum forces had launched a coup against Mr. Rabbani on New Year's Day.

On the contrary, the fighting was started by Rabbani's commander-in-chief, ex-Defence Minister Ahmad Shah Masoud, Gen. Raoufi said.

Since the fighting began six weeks ago, at least 10,000 people have been wounded and close to 1,000 have been killed. Hundreds of thousands of Kabul residents have been chased out of their homes, with many going to the eastern city of Jalalabad, 200 kilometres away.

COLUMN

U.K. depressives told to forget pills, try poetry

BRISTOL, England (R) — A study by British doctors has told people suffering from anxiety and depression to try reading poetry as an alternative to taking pills. Doctors taking part in the study at Bristol University in southwest England found a few lines by poets such as Wordsworth, Keats or Browning can overcome a patient's need for pills, the Daily Telegraph said Tuesday. With spending on anti-depressant drugs running at more than £80 million (\$117.5 million) a year in Britain these literary prescriptions could also save money for the state health service, the paper said. "I would have thought poetry is infinitely superior to any tablets just like music it is therapeutic," Dr. Alexander Macara, chairman of the British Medical Association of the study. "The pharmaceutical industry might not like it, of course."

Britain designs 'bomb proof' luggage container

LONDON (AFP) — An aircraft baggage container capable of absorbing shock waves from bombs such as the one which destroyed a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie in 1988, has been developed in Britain, the Times reported Tuesday. The holder, made of a highly classified secret material, was designed by scientists at Royal Ordnance, a subsidiary of British Aerospace (BAE), and was on public display at London's Heathrow Airport. BAE will not manufacture the complete units, which could have a worldwide market of 300,000 containers, but will sell licences, the paper said. Development work on the container began in 1988, immediately after a bomb placed in the luggage hold of the Pan Am jetliner caused the plane to explode over the Scottish border town of Lockerbie, killing 270 people. Royal Ordnance engineers told the paper the new design would not protect an aircraft against much larger bombs. "You cannot protect anything against a really determined terrorist. Nor could this container stop a much larger device destroying an aircraft," said one. "But airport security authorities should be able to detect bigger bombs than that used over Lockerbie," he added.

Britain at top of Euro-jail league

LONDON (AFP) — Britain has the highest rate of imprisonment in Western Europe, according to a Council of Europe survey published here late Monday by the prison watchdog, the Howard League for Penal Reform. The prison population in England and Wales climbed by a record 450 last week to 47,870 — nearly 600 more than the official capacity of the jail system — and has risen by more than five per cent since Jan. 1, the survey cited in the Guardian newspaper, found. According to the survey carried out in 23 countries, Britain jails 92.1 people per 100,000 head of population — the highest rate in Western Europe. Germany has 78.8 inmates per 100,000 inhabitants, while Italy has 56. Only one other country of the states surveyed, Hungary, has a higher rate of imprisonment. Its 14,629 prison population represents 146 inmates per 100,000.

Father withdraws appeal for devil of a name

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese father finally gave up Tuesday fighting authorities for the right to name his seven-month-old son "devil." "I am fed up with the fuss," the man said. Media reports quoted him as saying he had already made his point by fighting to name his son after the boy's name Akuma, or Devil, and was tired of waiting for a final ruling. A spokesman at the Tokyo Family Court's Hachioji branch said the man withdrew from the case after the local ward office appealed a Feb. 1 ruling approving Devil. The ward office initially accepted the court ruling but decided to appeal on grounds it broke social norms after consulting the Justice Ministry.